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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...
SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND SOCIALIST-FEMINIST THEORY

BY
BARBARA L. MARSHALL

A THESIS
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FOR F.A.K.E. WOMEN EVERYWHERE

ABSTRACT

This thesis interrogates the concept of social reproduction in socialist feminist theory. It argues that the reproduction problematic, as it has shifted and developed in socialist theory, has generated both useful insights and unresolved problems for feminist theory. Three key problems are identified: the conflation of the gendered division of labour with the public/private dualism, the continual recycling of the subject/structure divide and a lack of attention to possibilities for transformation.

After historicizing some of the key categories of socialist feminist analyses, such as the gendered division of labour, it becomes apparent that social reproduction remains a useful concept only if it is cast in relational, rather than structural, terms. It is suggested that the shift to a relational theory of social reproduction must be accompanied by a more fluid account of subjectivity and the subject-structure relationship. Resistive agency must be conceptualized as located in the embodied subject, whose identity has the potential to become a political point of departure.

In conclusion, a more open, multi-level framework for analysis is suggested, which conceptualizes social reproduction as re-production -- that is, as both the crystallization of past struggles and the creation of a new history.

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My husband, Yiannis Kiparissis, has endured what only someone who has shared love and living space with a person writing their dissertation can understand! For the ccuntless ways in which he made things go more smoothly, I love him dearly.

As Portia notes in the Merchant of Venice, "If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces." Intellectual feminism is both a necessity and a luxury. For every academic feminist working in her office or the library,

there are hundreds working on committees, preparing briefs, staffing telephones, lobbying politicians, and doing all of the other essential grass-roots work. Sometimes we are one and the same person, sometimes we focus our energy in one sphere over the other. Yet, whether we are writing, teaching, or licking envelopes, there is a common 'synergy' that drives us. This work is dedicated to F.A.K.E. women everywhere -- you know who you are!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
List of Tables		viii
List of Figures		ix
Introduction: The More Things Change		1
Chapter 1: The Concept of Social Reproduction		15
1.1	Introduction	15
1.2	Social Reproduction and Socialist Theory	18
1.3	Social Reproduction and Socialist Feminist Theory	33
1.4	Towards Reconstruction	48
1.5	Conclusion	58
Chapter 2: Rethinking the Gendered Division of Labour		62
2.1	Introduction	62
2.2	The Gendered Division of Labour	64
2.3	Theoretical Perspectives on the Gendered Division of Labour	85
2.4	Gender, Work and Class	97
2.5	Conclusion: Rethinking 'Public' and 'Private'	105
Chapter 3: Gender and Modernity		108
3.1	Introduction	108
3.2	Public and Private	111
3.3	Modernity and Rationality	120
3.4	Kinship, Gender and Modernity	126
3.5	Conclusion: The Failure of the Classical Project	144
Chapter 4: Gendered Identities		149
4.1	Introduction	149
4.2	Beyond the Production Paradigm	152
4.3	The Autonomous Ego?	157
4.4	Feminist Theories of the Subject: Essentialism versus Nominalism	167
4.5	Gendered Indentities as Interpreted Identities	185
4.6	Conclusions: The Politics of Gender Polarity	193

Chapter 5: Identity Politics..... 195

5.1 Introduction..... 195
5.2 Theoretical Approaches to State and Civil Society..... 197
5.3 The "War Over the Family"..... 215
5.4 Policy as Interpretation and Regulation..... 231
5.5 Conclusions: The Limits of Equality..... 235

By Way of Conclusion: A Point of Departure..... 239

References..... 251

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Participation Rates, 1985, by age, sex and marital status.....	67
2.2	Labour Force by Occupation and Sex, 1985....	73
2.3	Gender Composition of Selected Occupations,1981.....	74

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Labour Force Participation by Sex, 1901-1986.....	66
2.2	Labour Force by Industry and Sex, 1985.....	75
3.1	"Votes for our Mothers".....	136

INTRODUCTION: THE MORE THINGS CHANGE

The more things change, the more things stay the same. I doubt that there is a feminist alive who hasn't mumbled those words to herself at some point. Suffrage, affirmative action, equal pay laws, improved educational opportunities, family law reform, gender equality in the Charter, the availability of contraceptives -- to list the 'victories' gained by women in the last century would fill pages and pages. A politician who wishes to survive today must at least pay lip service to 'women's issues'. There has been tremendous change, and it has come about primarily through women's struggles. At the same time, the wage gap between men and women in the labour market has hardly budged, women still remain responsible for housework and childcare, poverty is increasingly 'feminized', violence against women is endemic to our society and political power remains overwhelmingly in the hands of men. 'Lip service' is exactly that. To borrow a phrase from Dickens -- it is the best of times, it is the worst of times.

We might say that the same rather depressing pattern holds in the academic world as in the 'real' world. Most universities in Canada now have a women's studies program, and most sociology departments have at least one course dealing with gender. We should no longer have to **justify** gender as a central concept in social analysis.[1] As Yeatman (1986:157) notes, feminist contributions to the social sciences have "...significantly recast the empirical reference points of sociological inquiry" and "...have made patterns of gender inequality as significant a concern as patterns of class, ethnic or racial inequality". As well as refocussing empirical work in sociology, the influence of feminism is reaching into social theory. Yet the academic revolution that feminist scholars seek hasn't occurred (Stacey and Thorne, 1985). As important as most scholars will admit feminist scholarship to be, it is rarely taught outside women's studies courses, the sole 'gender course' in a department, or perhaps in the obligatory week on 'women and...' in other courses. It might warrant a footnote or two, sometimes even a page or two, in progressive theoretical pieces, but rarely makes it into the heart of the argument, for to do so would indelibly stamp

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[1]This sentence originally read "It **is** no longer necessary...". Personal communication with Winnie Tomm, coordinator of Women's Studies at the University of Alberta, has tempered my undue optimism.

it as 'feminist' theory rather than social theory.

This is not a work in feminist theory as a perspective on social theory, but a work in feminist theory as social theory. The central concept that I wish to interrogate is that of 'social reproduction' (which is essentially an academic way of saying 'the more things change...') and the theoretical paradigm that I will focus on is that of socialist feminism.

Terminology always presents difficulties. Jaggar (1983: 124) defines socialist feminism as that which "...attempts to interpret the historical materialist method of traditional Marxism so that it applies to the issues made visible by radical feminists'. The obvious question is what differentiates socialist feminism from Marxist feminism. Jaggar's view is that it is "...the most consistent application of Marxist method and therefore the most 'orthodox' form of Marxism" (Ibid.). In my view, while socialist feminism embraces Marxist feminism, it is not exhausted by the latter. The focus of much recent socialist feminist theory on multiple systems of domination which cannot be reduced to the capital/wage relationship suggests a significant relocation of the Marxian problematic.

Yet the very term 'socialist-feminist' denotes a theoretical and political endeavor which seeks to struggle

against both class and gender inequality. The feminist critique insisted that theories of capitalism, with class as the basic organizing principle of history, had to be supplemented with a theory of patriarchy,[2] to account for the existence and persistence of gender inequalities. Thus, theorizing the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy and the reproduction of class and gender inequalities has been the consuming task of Marxist-influenced feminist theory. The assumptions of gender-blind analyses, which ignored gender by imbuing the sexual division of labour with a 'natural' essence, or particularized gender relations by confining them to the 'private' sphere, have been soundly criticized by historical and contemporary studies of the family, the workplace, and the interrelationship of domestic and wage

---

[2]The utility of the term 'patriarchy' has been subject to much debate in the feminist literature (see for example Armstrong and Armstrong, 1983; Alexander and Taylor, 1981; Barrett, 1980; Fox, 1988; Omvedt, 1986; Rowbotham, 1981). Contrary to the most common criticism of its use, I do not think the term itself implies a transhistorical structure -- it may be erroneously used in this way, but it is not an inherent feature of the term. I will follow Lerner's (1986:239) definition of patriarchy as 'the institutionalized system of male dominance' and agree with her that the task of feminist history is to "...trace with precision the various forms and modes in which patriarchy appears historically, the shifts and changes in its structure and function, and the adaptations it makes to female pressures and demands". I also concur with Fox (1988: 176-7) that an adequate conceptualization of patriarchy must include both the levels of social structure and gendered subjectivity and their interrelationship.

labour. It has thus become difficult to view the division of labour by gender, and patterns of gender inequality as anything less than historically grounded and socially constructed phenomena which are integral to the analysis of social life. Yet, debates continue around how best to conceptualize the relationship between gender and class, and between capitalism and patriarchy. Central to most theoretical accounts of this relationship, although often not explicit, is the assumption that configurations of class and gender inequality are mutually implicated in the process of social reproduction.[3] More accurately, as a result of the tendency to fit feminism into the political priorities of socialism, it is an assumption that gender ineqality is necessary for the reproduction of capitalism.

What is missing from these accounts is an exploration of the concept of social reproduction itself -- its manifestations in different theories, the underlying assumptions, and the conceptual problems that have resulted from both its uncritical adoption by some versions of feminist theory and its outright rejection by other versions.

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[3]See for example the voluminous literature on the relationship between gender and class, much of which implicitly accepts the notion of mutual implication in social reproduction. Crompton and Mann (1986), Eisenstein (1979) and Sargeant (1981) have all edited important collections of articles. See also Barrett (1980), Marshall (1987,1988) and Walby (1986) for overviews of the issues raised.

The intent of this project is to go beyond the critique of existing theoretical work to contribute to the development of a reconstructed socialist-feminist theory. I use the term reconstructed (as opposed to 'new') in the sense in which Habermas (1979:95) defines it:

> ...reconstruction signifies taking a theory apart and putting it back together in a new form in order to attain more fully the goal it has set for itself.

To do this, it is first necessary to develop some conceptual clarity. To date, there has been little attempt to systematically examine the concepts underlying the analysis of class and gender and link them to the more general problematic of the reproduction or transformation of the oppressive social arrangements that order them. Two key questions stem from this basic problematic. As Connell (1983:146) notes, the first question to be posed of a theory of social reproduction is "what exactly is being reproduced?" Logically following from this is the question of how the "reproducing" is accomplished. Following from Marx's famous dictum that the point is not just to describe the world, a critical theory must also ask the question of how we can encourage transformation rather than reproduction of an oppressive order. As Aronowitz and Giroux (1985:73) suggest, to do so requires that we "...reconstruct the major theories of reproduction in order to abstract from them their most radical

and emancipatory insights".

This reconstruction requires that we also confront some of the underlying epistemological issues. The legacy of 'scientific marxism' haunts most reproduction theories, and this has been the grounds for a number of epistemological critiques. A considerable body of literature on 'feminist epistemologies' has emerged, which has exposed the androcentric bias of both mainstream and Marxist social science.

Harding (1986b) and Hawkesworth (1989) both identify three key epistemological models in feminism: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theories, and feminist postmodernism. Feminist empiricism aims its critique at eliminating sexism as a bias which violates the methodological norms of the scientific method. Thus, Eichler (1987:43) suggests that the ultimate goal of feminist research is the development of a non-sexist approach in the social sciences, to make our knowledge of the social world more complete, while at the same time retaining a commitment to a positivist philosophy. Feminist standpoint theories are more critical of the 'scientific method' itself, charging that it is irreversibly flawed by its androcentrism, and suggest a "successor science" which is distinctly feminist, privileging the standpoint of women in a way which claims "...to overcome

the dichotomizing that is characteristic of the Enlightenment/bourgeois world view and its science" (Harding,1986b:142). Nancy Hartsock (1985) and Dorothy Smith (1987) are representative of this epistemological model, which expresses a distinct hermeneutical component. Neither feminist empiricism nor feminist standpoint theories are inherently incompatible with theories of social reproduction, and they have both influenced the feminist appropriation of the problematic in important ways.[4]

The greatest epistemological challenge to reproduction theories, and one which has been influential in feminism, has come from post-modernism, or post-structuralism. Poststructuralism dissolves the notion of totality, abandons any conception of material interests which exist prior to their discursive articulation, and suggests that "...the world be treated as text, as a play of signifiers with no determinate meaning, as a system of signs whose meaning is hidden and diffuse, as a discourse that resists decoding because of the infinite power of language to conceal and obfuscate" (Hawkesworth, 1989: 554). This deconstructive strategy has served as a valuable corrective to some of the

---

[4]For example, the debates about gender, work and class (reviewed in Chapter 2) are rooted in a feminist empiricist standpoint, with the key arguments revolving around how to better operationalize class to account for the experience of women.

excesses of reproduction theories. As Flax (1986) suggests, the 'post-modern' moment in recent feminist theory has called into question the utility of those approaches which seek to uncover a single logic which generates the multiplicity of oppressive social relations which constitute domination. This is a serious, and largely warranted, charge against much social reproduction theory. The lesson of earlier attempts to marry Marxism and feminism was that gender domination could not be reduced to another facet of the logic of capital. The post-structuralist critique, as well as the voices of women of colour, of poor women, of disabled women, of unchilded[5] women, of lesbians and of non-western women have cautioned us against the positing of an 'essential' feminine subject. Yet a wholesale embracement of a post-structuralist epistemology is not an adequate strategy for feminist theory. First, it is simply untenable to suggest that nothing exists outside of its construction in 'text' or 'discourse'. As Hawkesworth (1989:555) notes:

> Rape, domestic violence, and sexual harassment (to mention just a few of the realities that circumscribe women's lives) are not fictions or figurations that admit of the free play of signification. The victim's account of these experiences is not simply an arbitrary imposition of a purely fictive meaning on an otherwise

[5]I am grateful to Dawn Currie (1988) for suggesting the terms childed and unchilded to describe women's reproductive experience, which I consider a great advance over opposing 'mothers' to women who are 'childless' or 'childfree'.

meaningless reality.

One of the most valuable lessons of post-structuralism is that interests must be discursively articulated, but we also need to recognize that there are particular materially grounded standpoints which do pre-exist and shape that articulation. To propose otherwise is to deny that "the world is more than a text" (Hawkesworth, 1989:555). Secondly, the inherent relativism of post-structuralism makes it difficult to account for own priveleged perspective. As Nancy Fraser asks of Foucault: "Why is struggle preferable to submission? Why ought domination to be resisted? Only with the introduction of some normative notions could he begin to tell us what is wrong with the modern power/knowledge regime and why we ought to oppose it" (cited in Habermas,1987:284). This has important implications, not only for a critical feminist theory, but for a critical feminist practice.

A useful way of framing a critical feminist epistemology, which allows us to incorporate the insights of each strand while avoiding an either/or choice, is to use Habermas's (1971) typology of "knowledge interests". He posits that all knowledge-seeking activity is inherently connected to interests. Empirical-analytical knowledge has an interest of control, hermeneutic-historical knowledge has an interest in understanding, and critical-emancipatory knowledge

is directed towards the transformation of oppressive realities. Feminism as a politically motivated enterprise is necessarily concerned with critical-emancipatory knowledge. As Morrow (1985:713) stresses, Habermas's distinction between these three types of knowledge-interests, "...does not seek to question the possibility and the potential of the first two forms of knowledge, but does demand that they situate their self-understanding in relation to each other as well as the normative critique of domination". As Habermas notes, a critical social science must go beyond the production of nomological knowledge:

> ...to determine when theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such, and when they express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed (cited in Bernstein,1976:203).

This is, of course, the essence of the feminist project.

While Habermas identifies the hegemony of positivism as ideological domination, the feminist epistemological critique ties it to a specifically patriarchal form of ideological domination. Thus, Flax (1983:269) has suggested that:

> The task of feminist epistemology is to uncover how patriarchy has permeated both our concept of knowledge and the concrete content of bodies of knowledge, even that claiming to be emancipatory....A feminist epistemology is thus both an aspect of feminist theory and a preparation for and central element of a more adequate theory of human nature and politics.
>
> There <u>has</u> been an unfortunate tendency in much feminist

theory to look for 'the' cause of sexual oppression, but this is a tendency which is being eclipsed in recent work. As feminist scholarship grows and gains legitimation, there is less need to develop 'grand theory' -- a greater theoretical division of labour has given way to a more multi-textured and interdisciplinary approach. As Fraser and Nicholson (1988:391) suggest, feminist theory which seeks to overcome the oppression of women in its 'endless variety and monotonous similarity' must:

> ...tailor its methods and categories to the specific task at hand, using multiple categories when appropriate and forswearing the metaphysical comfort of a single 'feminist method' or 'feminist epistemology'. In short, this theory would look more like a tapestry composed of threads of many different hues than one woven in a single colour.

My aim is to weave some threads into this tapestry.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the concept of social reproduction from its origins in classical Marxism through its use in current socialist feminist theory. Rejecting the post-structuralist call to abandon the concept altogether, I will suggest that the problematic status of social reproduction as a theoretical concept is related to several fundamental problems in existing formulations of the critique of capitalist patriarchy: the conflation of the gender division of labour with the public/ private division, the lack of an adequate dialectic between processes of accumulation and

processes of legitimation, and an underemphasis on possibilities for transformation, rather than reproduction, of the existing gender order.

Chapter 2 will set out the current patterns of the gender division of labour, in terms of what Connell (1987) has termed "the gendered logic of accumulation". While focussing on Canadian data, and Canadian labour history, parallels will be drawn to both other industrialized nations and to the creation of newly gendered divisions of labour on the global scale. I will then review some key problems in theories of gender, work and class and suggest that they have tended to both conflate and over-abstract the public/private distinction and the gendered division of labour.

Chapter 3 will further explore the public/private distinction in relation to, but not as organically linked to, the gendered division of labour, by considering the place of gender in both classical and contemporary theories of modernity. Conceptions of the public and private are linked to theorizations of the individual-society relationship, and by bringing some historical evidence to bear on the treatment of gender and kinship in theories of modernity, I argue that women have been systematically excluded from full individuality. This suggests a necessary focus on the reproduction of gendered identities.

Chapter 4 takes up the question of gendered identities. Against both essentialist theories of gendered subjects and theories which ignore gender as constituative of subjectivity altogether, I will focus on the multiple and often contradictory nature of subjectivity, and the active construction of gendered identities in terms of historically available modes of interpretation.

Chapter 5 focusses on the politics of the regulation of gender. Drawing on some recent work in the area of 'moral regulation', I will review theories of the state, civil society and social movements, and illustrate their interrelationship in the regulation of gender which is embodied in the revitalized 'war over the family'. I will suggest here that the rhetoric of the New Right, which seeks to realign the relationship between the public and the private, couched in terms of the gendered division of labour, is illuminating in drawing out the consequences of their conflation, and suggests a 'legitimation crisis' which can initiate a normative grounding of feminist values for transformation.

In conclusion, I will suggest a more open and multi-level framework of analysis, in which social reproduction is conceptualized as re-production -- that is, as both the crystallization of past struggles and the creation of a new history.

CHAPTER 1

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The concept of 'social reproduction' has a long and uneven history in the literature.[1] With its origins in Marxian class theory, it has often been invoked as an explanatory tool, referring to the complex of social relations and institutions that serve to reproduce capitalism. Rooted in the Hegelian notion of society as a totality,[2] socialist theory has long been concerned with unravelling the relationships among the components of capitalist social formations that secure their continuation. The development of socialist-feminist theory has added a new dimension to the problematic of social reproduction. Not only capitalism, but patriarchy is reproduced; not only is the working class reproduced, but it is

---

[1] I am focusing here on the concept of social reproduction as it has developed in Marxist and Marxist-influenced thought. See Morrow and Torres (1987) for an overview of the concept as it has appeared in other traditions (eg. structural-functionalism, systems theory) and their relationship to historical materialist interpretations.

[2] Martin Jay (1984) provides a detailed and sophisticated analysis of the concept of totality in Western Marxism.

reproduced as male and female.

Feminism has not posed the only challenge to an orthodox Marxist conception of social reproduction. Debates, such as those concerning the analytical primacy of the mode of production, the autonomy of the political and ideological, and the tension between economism and voluntarism, have fuelled the development of a range of socialist theories which have substantially reconstructed the Marxian problematic. While gender has never been a focus in much of this work, the insights of feminist theory are important to key debates, and the questions raised in these debates are important to feminism.

A number of key problems confront socialist feminist theory in taking up the social reproduction problematic as its own. Not the least of these is the conceptual confusion around the term 'reproduction'. Edholm, Harris and Young (1977), for example, identify three separate interpretations of the concept: social reproduction (the reproduction of the main production relations in society), reproduction of the labour force (socialization and maintenance of workers), and human reproduction (procreation). There has been a distinct lack of success in the literature in developing an adequate theoretical framework based on these often confused interpretations of 'reproduction'. Pahl (1984: 328), for example, distinguishes between biological, cultural (symbolic) and social (material)

reproduction, suggesting that they are related, but he dismisses the need to carefully examine their relationship:

> It seems to me to be self-evident that social, cultural and biological reproduction are the central social processes of society and that the household has been the basic instrument for achieving such reproduction at least since the thirteenth century...and probably well before that (Ibid: 328-9).

Such an assertion sweeps a number of important theoretical and epistemological questions regarding the relationship between 'reproductive' processes under the rug, including the question of how individual subjects are caught up in these 'central social processes'.[3] The reproduction of masculinity and femininity at the level of individual psyche has been a key concern of feminist approaches which attempt to incorporate a psychoanalytic perspective, and their insights cannot be ignored.

The growth and fragmentation of both Western Marxism in general and socialist-feminism in particular has embodied several significant shifts in the 'reproduction problematic'. At each turn, both valuable insights and unresolved problems are generated. This chapter will examine these insights and

---

[3]Discussions about Pahl's work with Marie Carlson have been very helpful in identifying problems in his approach. As I will argue at a later point, the lack of clarity about 'what is being reproduced' has contributed to the tendency to conflate the sexual division of labour with the separation of the public and domestic spheres and this remains an important problem in socialist-feminist theory.

problems. I will first sketch the problematic of social reproduction as it has appeared in the literature of Marx and Marxism, through to its explicit abandonment in emergent forms of 'post-Marxism' and post structuralism. I will then review the manner in which the question of social reproduction has been framed by socialist-feminist theories, stressing both their tendency to recycle some of the major flaws of non-feminist theories and the insights they have generated which hold some potential for reconstructing socialist theory. Finally, I will outline some key problems that must be confronted in developing a critical feminist theory which neither dispenses with the insights of reproduction theories nor replicates their most serious errors.

1.2 Social Reproduction and Socialist Theory

a. Marx and Engels

It is in Marx's theory of history that we find the seeds of his theory of social reproduction. History, for Marx, is the continual process of human beings creating, satisfying and re-creating their needs. In the German Ideology he sets out the basics of this historical process as having three 'moments': the satisfaction of basic needs, the simultaneous creation of new needs, and production of new human beings. Yet it is not humans acting in isolation[4] that engage in these

[4]As Giddens (1971:35) points out, it was Marx's insistence on the social nature of the productive process that (continued...)

historical acts -- production is from the outset a social act. "By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end" (Marx and Engels,1970:50). Social reproduction, then, must necessarily be the reproduction of social relationships. While Marx at the outset recognized production of 'fresh life in procreation' as one of the 'moments' of production, it was the social relations of material production that occupied the bulk of his subsequent analysis.[5] In his analysis of capitalism, it was the capital/wage relationship which was given centrality.

In its simplest form, capitalist social reproduction for Marx involved the reproduction of the separation between capital and wage labour through the capitalist production process:

> Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capital relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer (Marx, 1946:591)

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[4](...continued)
was at the root of his critique of utilitarian political economy.

[5]As Sayer (1987:77-82) indicates, this has important consequences for Marxist analyses of social reproduction, particularly in attempts to theorize domestic labour as production. See the discussion of the domestic labour debates below.

'Simple' reproduction is premised upon the appropriation of surplus value by the capitalist class which effectively reproduces the structure of capitalism as is. 'Extended' reproduction implies accumulation, which expands the scale of production and thus transforms the structure somewhat, but in a consistent direction still based on the separation of capital and labour. It was thus the continuity of capitalist production that was the central concern.

Marx himself had little to say about women, as his analysis was largely constructed on an assumption of the worker as the male head of a household. We thus find references to women and children as 'wives and daughters of the proletariat' (Marx and Engels,1948;27). Engels (1972) replicates Marx's basic assumptions, but was more explicit about the position of women, linking the emergence of the family as an economic unit, monogamous marriage and the dependence of women on men as crucial components of the conditions for the reproduction of the ownership of private property, and hence the capital/wage relationship. Engels (1972:71) reiterates the central place given to human reproduction in The German Ideology in the preface to Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State:

> According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter,

> and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species.

A number of sympathetic critics[4] have suggested that this passage has often been misinterpreted to legitimize a theoretical separation between human and material reproduction. More correctly, Engels's identification of human reproduction as analytically equivalent to material production sets the basis for his analysis, but he is unsuccessful in maintaining this in its execution. Human reproduction 'slips' in status: "As human reproduction slides out of the material base, its organization becomes dependent on the organization of production" (Humphries, 1987;11). We are thus returned to the organization of material production, and specifically capitalist relations of material production, as pre-eminent in the theory of social reproduction.

b. The Fragmentation of Western Marxism

To speak of Marx is one thing -- to speak of Marxism is quite another. In the development of what has been called 'Western' Marxism, theories have tended to cluster around two poles, each emphasizing different themes in Marx's work. Gouldner (1983) refers to the 'two Marxisms' as scientific and humanist, Howard (1977) speaks of 'materialist' and 'idealist' strains and Hall (1980) refers to the 'two paradigms' of

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[4]See for example the collection edited by Sayers et.al. (eds.) (1987).

structuralism and culturalism. As Hall (1981:381) points out, both approaches developed in reaction to 'economism' -- the reductionist interpretation of the base-superstructure metaphor into which political Marxism congealed in the early 20th century. It is significant to note that the concept of social reproduction in Western Marxism "has become prominent in the past two decades primarily in the context of the analysis of superstructural phenomenon", and has led to increased interest in processes of cultural reproduction:

> Initially, such efforts built upon the notion of social reproduction...in relation to Marx's account of the reproduction of labour power.. But beyond this narrower focus, the term has also been extended with reference to the notion of 'cultural reproduction' more generally.... Beyond loose distinctions between types of reproduction...the use of the concept for social and cultural phenomena has been largely elaborated independently (Morrow and Torres, 1988:22).

To sort out the complex issues underlying the fragmentation of contemporary Marxism is beyond the scope of this chapter. Nonetheless, a summary of the central differences in approaches to the problem of social reproduction is warranted. The key point of divergence is on the question of agency -- the relationship between subject and structure.

1. Structuralist Approaches

Althusser is generally seen as the exemplar of a structuralist reading of Marx. Althusser explicitly reframes the Marxist base/superstructure distinction in terms of social

reproduction. Seeing society as a complex, structured totality, Althusser argued that the political and ideological levels were not merely reflections of the economic level, but rather had 'relative autonomy'. Borrowing the psychoanalytic concept of 'overdetermination'[7] to understand the complex and shifting relationships between the economic and ideological levels, he nonetheless saw the economic level as determinate in 'the last instance'. Yet ideology and 'ideological state apparatuses' were accorded an important place in the overall process of social reproduction. That is, capitalism depends not only on the continued reproduction of the forces of production (the means of production and labour power), but also of the relations of production (the social organization of production based on ownership and control of the forces of production). The latter requirement is accomplished by ideological state apparatuses, such as the educational system, the family, and the media, which produce the correct consciousness in people for the reproduction of the relations of production. Actual agency, then, is an illusion:

> The structure of the relations of production determines the places and functions occupied and adopted by the agents of production, who are never anything more than the occupants of these places....the true 'subjects' (in the sense of constitutive subjects of the process) are therefore not these occupants or functionaries...but the

[7]In psychoanalysis, overdetermination refers to the complex of instincts or drives that one act or object-choice might satisfy.

> definition and distribution of these places and functions (Althusser and Balibar, 1970:180)

Craib (1984:144) aptly uses the metaphor of the puppet theatre to describe this conception of the subject:

> ...the strings originate at the economic level, the mode of production; they pass through the state and the ideological state apparatuses...and they finally work the puppets through an imaginary sense of being free, of choosing, of acting.

It is not difficult to see the underlying functionalism of this approach. All the parts of the structure are theorized in terms of the function they perform in reproducing that structure, and 'subjects' are inextricably dominated by that structure. The important criticisms of this approach are those directed at its ahistorical nature -- the relatively static model of society upon which it depends -- and the problem of subjectivity. If subjectivity is an illusion, what are the possibilities for liberating the puppets? As Connell (1979) suggests in his cogent critique of the Althusserian approach to class, the political import of this is an implicit defense of a quasi-Stalinist revolutionary vanguard as the only route towards transformation.

The influence of Althusser remains visible in a number of more recent Marxist approaches to social reproduction. The introductions to two anthologies purporting to deal with the question of social reproduction in advanced capitalist societies illustrate this. Walker (1978;xiii) defines social

reproduction as "...all the various social relations and institutions that serve to reproduce society without any fundamental change", and lists as its main aspects the technical division of labour in the firm, the social division of labour in society, the educational system, the state and the family. Dickinson and Russell (1986;5) define social reproduction as an approach which "...takes the dominant relationship of our time -- the wage labour/capital relationship -- as its principal object of analysis and considers the institutions, mechanisms and processes associated with the economic, social, political and ideological reproduction of this relationship".[8] Thus, while the analysis takes in a number of different factors outside the economy per se, there is an invariant structure (the capital wage/relationship) which is posited as being reproduced in an explicitly functionalist fashion. What was 'equilibrium' or 'pattern maintenance' in functionalism becomes 'social reproduction' in structuralist Marxism. As Willis (1981b:52) sums it up: "With no sense of structure being a contested medium as well as an outcome of social process, 'Reproduction' becomes a mechanized sleight of hand in an oh so

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[8]While neither of these anthologies is explicitly feminist in orientation, both seek to incorporate the feminist critique of Marxism. As Stacey (1988;54) notes in a review of Dickinson and Russell (1986), social reproduction conceived of in this way appears to be "...but a structuralist Marxist means of absorbing, without fully engaging with, feminist criticisms of Marxist analyses of gender, family and society".

serious theoretical vaudeville!"

2. Culturalist Approaches

As Hall (1980:69) suggests, culturalism's strengths can be derived from the weaknesses of structuralism, and 'from the latter's strategic absences and silences'. While structuralism builds on the second half of Marx's famous pronouncement on history -- that we make our own history, but not under conditions of our choosing -- culturalism emphasizes the first half of the equation. The shift in attention from structure to agency is accompanied by an epistemological shift to hermeneutic and historical methodology. While the culturalist approach lacks a singular dominant exemplar such as Althusser, it draws on the work of such diverse figures as Georg Lukács, Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson.

While structuralist Marxism stresses the 'power of objective structures of social relations of a particular social formation', culturalists stress the subjective moment -- 'the actual lived experience and interpretation of class, race and gender actors' (Apple, 1983:ix). Hall (1980) locates an important distinction between structuralism and culturalism in terms of the focus on 'ideology' in the former, and 'culture' in the latter. Structuralism tended to interpret ideology negatively, as a resource of the dominant class used "to reproduce the social relations and attitudes needed to sustain the social divisions of labour necessary for the existing

relations of production" (Giroux, 1983b:76). A shift in focus to culture attempts to grasp the complex way in which human practices constitute and are constituted by both ideological and structural moments:

> Culture is the distinctive shapes in which the material and social organization of life expresses itself...Culture is the way the social relations of a group are structured and shaped, but it is also the way those shapes are experienced, understood and interpreted (Hall and Jefferson, 1976:10).

The problematic of social reproduction thus takes on some new dimensions -- and as Willis (1981b) puts it, "cultural production is different from cultural reproduction is different from social reproduction is different from reproduction"!

In addition to the focus on culture vs. ideology, the very concepts rejected by Althusserian structuralism -- historicism and subjectivity -- are those embraced by culturalism. The historical subject becomes the focus of analysis. In opposition to the structuralist interpretation of history as a process without subjects, E.P. Thompson writes:

> ...history cannot be compared to a tunnel through which an express races until it brings its freight of passengers out into sunlit plains. Or, if it can be, then generation upon generation of passengers are born, live in the dark, and die while the train is still within the tunnel (1978;296).

Consciousness and experience become central to any account of historical process. 'Culture' thus takes on the status of a relatively autonomous realm in the social totality, one which is not a correspondence of the economic base, but is

constituted by the active practices of living, breathing subjects.

The principal critique of culturalism has been that it valorizes experience and 'meaning', and that this results in a lapse into pure voluntarism. Critics, such as Anderson (1980), charge that without attention to the structural conditions of action, only one side of the dialectic is presented. The culturalist emphasis on experience, and antipathy to causal analyses, also leads to some critics' accusations that it is an anti-theoretical stance. Yet the politicization of culture and the strong historical component of the culturalist approach have served as an important corrective to structuralist accounts.

c. Abandoning Social Reproduction: Post-Structuralism

Common to any theory of social reproduction is some notion of society as a totality. A number of recent contributions to socialist theory have abandoned the notion of totality altogether, and have thus dissolved the problematic of social reproduction. Illustrative in this respect is work such as that of the loosely-knit category of 'post-structuralism', which includes theorists such as Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard, and that of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) which is self-defined as 'post Marxist'. It is a vast oversimplification to group their work together, but in spite of differences there are some common themes. If anything characterizes this

theoretical turn, it is a rejection of any notion of social unity or constancy -- there is only narrative order which is discursively imposed.

Foucault's work has had a tremendous impact on recent social theory. His critique is largely directed against the notion of totality or 'totalization' in history:

> My aim is most decidedly not to use the categories of cultural totalities (whether world-views, ideal types, the particular spirit of the age) in order to impose on history, despite itself, the forms of structural analysis. The series described, the limits fixed, the comparisons and correlations made are based not on the old philosophies of history, but are intended to question teleologies and totalizations (Foucault,1972;15-6).

In contrast to structuralism's assumption of correspondence, it is a doctrine of non-correspondence. There is no continuity to history, no internal relationship between empirical observations which lie in wait for the theorist to discover them. To speak of continuous history is to impose the discourse of the present on the past, and to speak of 'totality' is to suggest political totalitarianism. His strategy is to unmask totalitarianizing discourse, a category into which most theories of social reproduction must fall, as inherently authoritarian. Yet this itself has political consequences: "...he does not provide a theoretical basis for distinguishing between discourses that lead to domination and those that pave the way for liberation. He never meditates on the power effect of his own discourse or provides criteria by

which one can distinguish its conservative and radical modes" (Poster,1984:151). This is a problem with post-structuralism more generally.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) dismiss the Marxist notion of a social totality as 'essentialism', and call for a conception of the social which is 'open' and 'unsutured':

> ...we must begin by renouncing the conception of 'society' as founding totality of its partial processes....There is no sutured space peculiar to 'society', since the social itself has no essence (Ibid.,95-6).

Their strategy is to rework the concept of hegemony as a 'logic of the contingent' by deconstructing what they have construed as Marxism's congealment of hegemony into determinacy. They treat the introduction of hegemony into Marxist analysis, particularly via Gramsci, not as a concept which enriched or extended that analysis, but as one which lays the ground for its supersession. Mounting an offensive against the association of identity with class position, and of relationships with production, they proceed to burst open the 'subject' as a unitary entity. We have, instead, a dispersion of 'subject positions' within a 'discursive structure' which is hegemonically (contingently) overdetermined:

> The category of subject is penetrated by the same ambiguous, incomplete and polysemical character which overdetermination assigns to every discursive identity....the dispersion of subject positions cannot constitute a solution: given that none of them manages ultimately to consolidate itself as a separate position, there is a game of overdetermination among them that reintroduces the

> horizon of an impossible totality (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985;12-2).

What does this mean for the problematic of social reproduction? Essentially, it dissolves the notion altogether -- there is no 'society', nothing social to be reproduced. We are left with a plurality of discursively dispersed and 'hegemonically articulated' subject positions, with no concept of social reality to place limits on or inform their action or consciousness. Laclau and Mouffe have produced a provocative critique of Marxist theory, and admittedly score some direct hits, but the ensuing political agenda of a 'radical democracy' that they present is untenable. There is no grounding for transformation here (for what is to be transformed?), only the promise of free-floating, discursive, guerilla-style intellectual attacks.

While there are valuable insights in the post-Marxist, post-structuralist critiques of the excesses of structuralism and subjectivism, the power of social criticism embodied in Marxist theories of social reproduction, and indeed the political import of Marx himself, is jettisoned. The liberatory potential of the conception of totality lies in its enabling us to envision a different totality, to theorize transformation rather than reproduction. Without the idea of an historically situated totality which is subject to transformation, we are left with only negative politics --

deconstruction without reconstruction. The implication, as Wilson and Weir (1986:107) point out, is that:

> ...there can be no way of establishing social or political priorities, and hence no prospect of elaborating a genuinely emancipatory strategy. The result is a political relativism which cannot be progressive (Wilson and Weir, 1986:107).

d. Summary

Social reproduction in socialist theory has appeared as both a seemingly powerful explanatory concept and as a fundamental problematic. Underlying conceptions of how society is constituted, and how elemental relationships are reproduced (or whether in fact they are reproduced) have permeated the development and fragmentation of Marxist social theories to the present day. The structuralist-culturalist divide has centred on reproduction as historical law vs. reproduction as contingent and experiential. Their different conceptions of totality have resulted in a tendency for both sides to replicate, rather than overcome, the fundamental dualism between agency and structure. Current developments in post-Marxist and post-structuralist theory suggest abandonment of the concept of totality, and hence any notion of social reproduction (or transformation) altogether.

As socialist-feminist theory has developed, it has not been immune from these debates. The seductiveness of 'social reproduction' as a way of 'counting women in' resulted in its often uncritical adoption in feminist circles. It is to the

development of socialist-feminist theory on these terms that I now turn.

1.3 Social Reproduction and Socialist-Feminist Theory

While Marxist theories of social reproduction were centrally concerned with the reproduction of capitalism, taking class relations as the basic organizing principle of history, the feminist critique insisted that we also need to account for the existence and persistence of sexual inequality. Socialist-feminist theory has thus been centrally concerned with the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy, and the reproduction of both class and gender relations. Influenced both by Marxism's analysis of class power, and radical feminism's analysis of male power, the problematic of social reproduction in socialist-feminist theory has taken on some new dimensions. As in Western Marxism generally, there remain a number of contentious theoretical issues.

a. The Domestic Labour Debates

The domestic labour debates were the first concerted efforts by feminists to analyze women's oppression within Marxism. While criticizing Marx for ignoring women's unpaid labour as an important factor in social reproduction, they nonetheless remained relatively faithful to Marx's overall concept of social reproduction, which, again, was primarily concerned with the reproduction of the capital/labour relationship. Key questions included the value of domestic

labour, and the centrality of women's domestic work in reproducing capitalist relations of production.[9] While they served an important role in making women visible in Marxist analyses, the domestic labour debates have been criticized for being overly economistic and functionalist,[10] and as Burton (1985:xvi) notes, for relying on "...a class analysis of categories rather than of relationships".[11]

What is important for our purposes in not a detailed analysis of the insights and impasses of the work on domestic labour, but rather the premises upon which the debates were conducted.[12] If we go back to Marx and Engels' earlier assertions of the 'production of people' as being as analytically as important as the 'production of goods', there are grounds for treating the 'mode of production' as

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[9]The collection edited by Fox (1980) is representative of Canadian work in this area. For overviews of the key issues, see Fox (1986) and Seccombe (1986).

[10]See for example, the exchanges between Curtis (1982) and Hamilton (1981;1982), also Miles (1983).

[11]Significantly, most of the work on domestic labour looked exclusively at the relationship of that labour to capital, ignoring the relationship of women to men. This is in direct contrast to the radical feminist literature at the time, which targeted men, not capitalism, as the primary beneficiaries of women's unpaid labour.

[12]My understanding of the importance of the underlying assumptions of these debates and their implications has been greatly enhanced by discussions with Derek Sayer. See Sayer (1987) for a more detailed critique of the way in which 'production', among other concepts, has been narrowly and incorrectly interpreted by much Marxist scholarship.

constituted by both (and for treating 'relations of production' as all those social relations within which production, more broadly conceived, occurs). The domestic labour debates, however, interpreted the mode of production as the production of material goods, and set up human reproduction, and the reproduction of wage labour, as being processes which occur outside the mode of production proper. This shift in interpretation was no doubt facilitated by Marx and Engels' own failure to develop their original insights on human reproduction. As Sayer (1987:81) suggests:

> Had Marx developed his broader German Ideology view of 'the production of life', the conceptual apparatus of historical materialism might have looked very different....Class relations would remain a central dimension, but would not necessarily be seen as the central -- let alone the exclusive -- dimension of social structure.

Neither Marx, nor Engels, nor the participants in the domestic labour debates developed historical materialism in this way. The splitting off of the production of goods from the production of people, with the latter being accorded a supporting role in the reproduction of the former, laid the basis for more than a decade of debate around the relative priority of capitalism vs. patriarchy and class vs. gender.

The domestic labour debates served an important purpose in their insistence that gender had something to do with the social division of labour, and that there was a structural basis to women's inequality. Yet as long as the capital/wage

relationship is held as the key production relationship, its reproduction will be defined in terms of a narrowly interpreted base/superstructure image, with the production of material goods as the base. Once this basic framework is accepted, it becomes difficult to do anything but describe (but not really explain) how a sexual division of labour 'functions' to reproduce the relations of production thus defined. This was the crucial failure of the domestic labour debates, and one which much subsequent Marxist theory has replicated.

b. The Althusserian Legacy

Still committed to a Marxist analysis of capitalism, but more receptive to the radical feminist critique of patriarchy, was the work of feminists influenced by Althusserian Marxism. Most notable in this vein was Juliet Mitchell's (1971) Women's Estate.[13] Using the conception of the social formation as a complex structured totality, and the notion of overdetermination, she analyzed women's oppression as anchored in four 'structures': production, reproduction, sexuality and socialization.

> In a complex totality each independent sector has its own autonomous reality though each is ultimately, but only ultimately, determined by the economic factor....Because the unity of woman's

[13]Mitchell also draws on the structural anthropology of Levi-Strauss in her analysis of kinship, but the framework she builds in Women's Estate owes more to the more explicitly Marxist structuralism of Althusser. The influence of Levi-Strauss is more pronounced in Psychoanalysis and Feminism (1974).

> condition at any time is in this way the product of several structures, moving at different paces, it is always 'overdetermined' (Mitchell, 1971:101).

Each of the structures has its own history, each generates its own form of sexual domination, and each can be in contradiction with another structure at a given point in time, but just as it was for Althusser, the economic is determinate in the last instance. With the placement of reproduction, sexuality and socialization beside production in the analysis, women's oppression becomes a much more complex phenomenon than the domestic labour debates would suggest.[14] Importantly, women's role in the family, defined as a patriarchal (not just capitalist) configuration, and the family as an ideological apparatus, were implicated in each of these 'structures'.

More recently, structuralist Marxism has been given currency in feminist work by Gimenez (1982,1987). Drawing on both Althusser and the structuralist anthropology of Godelier, she outlines what might be termed a 'correspondence' theory of women's oppression, referring to the elements of the totality as the mode of production and "its corresponding social, political, legal, and ideological structures" (1987:54). Chief among these corresponding structures is the family -- the context in which social classes are reproduced, and through

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[14]As Hamilton (1981:121) comments in her review of one collection of articles on domestic labour (Fox,1980), "...there is no sex and hardly any children".

which the capitalist mode of production 'recruits' men and women for the positions of 'agents of reproduction'. Gimenez (1982:320) summarizes the essence of her argument as follows:

> ...in capitalist social formations, the observable forms of sexual inequality are determined, in the last instance, by the historically specific way in which the mode of production (conceived as a complex structured whole in which the capitalist mode of production is dominant) affects the access of the labouring and nonlabouring members of the subordinate classes...to the material conditions necessary for their daily and generational reproduction.

Social reproduction again becomes the reproduction of classes -- if we strip away the abstractions, there is little left but the logic of capital winging its way through history.[15]

As Lieven (1981:261) suggests, there were two reasons why Althusser's formulation was attractive to feminists. First, he provided a theory of ideology which articulated its autonomous effect, thus opening lines of inquiry around the family, the state, and the educational system as 'apparatuses' implicated in the reproduction of both capitalism and women's oppression. Secondly, he suggested psychoanalytic (specifically Lacanian) concepts as useful tools in understanding the internalization

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[15]While Mitchell (1971:99) suggested that we need to "ask the feminist questions but try to come up with some Marxist answers", Gimenez (1982:293) states that "In my view, the only way to come up with Marxist answers is to begin by asking Marxist questions". Thus, Gimenez is less concerned than Mitchell was with the questions of male power posed by radical feminists. While less explicitly structuralist, a similar argument is developed by Vogel (1983).

of ideology. As Mitchell (1974) later argues, we need to understand how ideology functions through the unconscious, positing the unconscious as "...the domain of the reproduction of culture or ideology" (413). Gimenez is less sanguine about the usefulness of psychoanalytic theory, but concedes that feminist analyses of psychological oppression might be critically appropriated if they are first "...integrated with the Structuralist Marxist analysis of their specifically capitalist structural and superstructural determinants" (1982:321).

The debates of the late 70's and early 80's around the 'unhappy marriage' of Marxism and feminism (Eisenstein,1979; Sargent,1981) confronted the problems of the structuralist legacy. Hartmann (1981;2) took the metaphor of 'a marriage' literally:

> The "marriage" of marxism and feminism has been like the marriage of husband and wife depicted in English common law: marxism and feminism are one, and that one is marxism....either we need a healthier marriage or we need a divorce.

The solution seemed to be some form of 'dual systems' theory -- the positing of capitalism and patriarchy as separate but related systems of social relations. The problem with this, as Iris Young (1981:49) suggests, is that it accepts Marxism's "gender blind analysis of the relations of production, wishing only to add onto it a separate conception of the relations of gender hierarchy".

c. Psychoanalysis and Feminism

The post-war period witnessed a number of divergent attempts to integrate psychoanalytic concepts with Marxist analysis in order to account for the ideological reproduction of workers under capitalism. Feminist theory in the 1970's approached the ideological reproduction of men and women, or more specifically masculinity and femininity, in a similarly diverse fashion. I will briefly outline two such approaches here -- those of Juliet Mitchell (1974) and Nancy Chodorow (1978).

Mitchell may be credited with introducing -- at least to English speaking audiences -- the utility of psychoanalysis for feminist inquiry. Until the publication of Feminism and Psychoanalysis in 1974, Freud had been denounced by most feminists as only justifying women's oppression through a creed of 'biology is destiny'. Mitchell turned this indictment of psychoanalysis back on itself, suggesting that: "However it may have been used, psychoanalysis is not a recommendation *for* a patriarchal society, but an analysis *of* one" (1974:xiii). Mitchell's appropriation of psychoanalysis builds on a structuralist theory of ideology (influenced by Althusser), and a structuralist theory of kinship (influenced by Levi-Strauss), and it is the relationship she sketches between these two 'structures' and the unconsciousness that has been influential in feminist theory. Setting up the "economic mode of

capitalism and the ideological mode of patriarchy" as "two autonomous areas", she asserts that "patriarchal law speaks to and through each person in his (sic) unconscious" (1974:412-3). Barrett (1980:61-2) finds this position leading not only to analytical problems, but to limited political ends:

> In particular it tends to the conclusion that class struggle requires economic change, whereas women's liberation requires a 'cultural revolution'....The ideology of masculinity and femininity, of heterosexual familialism, is too deeply embedded in the division of labour and capitalist relations production to crumble under cultural and ideological offensive alone.

A more sophisticated, and ultimately more influential, account than Mitchell's is given in Chodorow's The Reproduction of Mothering (1978). Taking the problematic of social reproduction from the societal to the psychological level, she constructs her theory on the universal fact that it is women who mother. She interprets this not as a biologically-given necessity, but as a cultural invention which has become integrated into the feminine psyche. Because women have almost exclusive responsibility for the care of the young, children experience a sexually differentiated process of individuation and separation. Girls experience a lack of separation from the mother, which leads them to want to be mothers. Boys, on the other hand, must learn that they are different. They cannot identify with the femininity of the mother, yet do not have the close proximity to the father (because he is away from the

private sphere of the home), so they must turn to the cultural image of masculinity. Influenced by the work of the early Frankfurt School on authority and the family, she thus posits that female-centred child-rearing reproduces not only motherhood, but capitalism, by turning girls into mothers and boys into workers. The reorganization of parenting thus becomes a central political goal. Yet, as Donovan (1985:112) notes: "Chodorow seems to think that if people become non-functional to the capitalist work structure, it will wither away".

The chief criticism of psychoanalytic approaches to the reproduction of sexual inequality relate to its assumption of an ahistorical and trans-cultural kinship structure as being at the root of women's oppression. To universally speak of women as 'mothers' denies the complexity and contradictions of the social relations in which women's oppression can be located. Elizabeth Wilson makes a more serious charge -- that psychoanalytic feminism becomes an expression of 'psychic law and order', and suggests only 'endless contemplation of how we came to be chained':

> The last thing feminists need is a theory that teaches them only to marvel anew at the constant recreation of the subjective reality of subordination and which reasserts male domination more securely than ever within theoretical discourse (1986:168).

In spite of their shortcomings, the initial attempts to theorize the reproduction of masculinity and femininity at the level of individual psyche were important in introducing this level of analysis into socialist-feminist theory. It is a level of analysis which cannot be ignored.

d. Poststructuralism and Feminism

The feminist reception of post-structuralism has been relatively recent, and post-structuralism's themes have been varied in their application. In England, there was some feminist affinity for the work of Hindess and Hirst, but that romance was short-lived.[16] More influential has been the work of French feminists drawing primarily on Lacan's psychoanalysis and Derrida's linguistic deconstruction (Kristeva, 1980,1981,1986; Cixous, 1985; Irigaray, 1985) and some recent Anglo-American works influenced by Foucault's version of discourse theory (Diamond and Quinby,1988; Ferguson, 1984; Weedon, 1987). Against what is construed as an 'essentialist' conception of the subject in much feminist theory, the theoretical tack here is the deconstruction and decentering of

[16]Most of the women on the editorial board of Politics and Power (a leading forum for 'discourse theory' in Britain) resigned in 1981 in response to Paul Hirst's conservative stance on feminism (see the open letter in Vol.3, 1981). For a detailed critique of Hindess and Hirst, see Corrigan and Sayer (1978).

the 'feminine subject'.[17]

For Kristeva (1981:39), sexual difference "...is translated by and translates a difference in the relationship of subjects to the symbolic contract which is the social contract; a difference, then, in the relationship to power, language and meaning". Picking up on Lacan's emphasis on language as the symbolic order of power, women become defined by their exclusion from that order, by what they are not. As Irigaray (1985) puts it, we are "the sex which is not one". It is not transformation which is our political aim, it is rupture -- "the explosion of social codes" (Kristeva,1980:166). To talk of feminism is to invoke only a temporary category of 'speaking subjects'.

The feminist appropriation of Foucault appears to be both cautious and critical, and at least one recent text suggests that it is the variety of post-structuralist theory "which is arguably of most interest to feminists" (Weedon,1987:22). Of particular interest has been his theory of discourse and power, and within this theory, his work on the production and control of sexuality. Foucault's conception of power as plural and not entirely negative, and his deconstructive approach to the 'subject', have been instructive for feminists. As Martin

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[17]The contributions of various feminist approaches to theorizing the 'subject' will be assessed in more detail in Chapter 4.

(1988:16) sums it up:

> What is useful for us is the suggestion to be read out of Foucault's work that we analyze the historically and discursively specific ways in which woman has figured as a constitutive absence. To totalize or universalize Otherness as an answer to the question of woman is to leave ourselves with no possibility for understanding or intervening in the processes through which meaning is produced, distributed, and transformed in relation to the shifting articulation of power in our world.

The subject becomes decentred and dispersed, constituted in a multiplicity of power relations that produce meanings. While this assists us in grasping sexual oppression in its 'endless variety', it does little for our understanding of its 'monotonous similarity' (Fraser and Nicholson,1988)

The post-structuralist attitude towards subjectivity results in what Alcoff (1988:417) terms a 'nominalist' conception of woman -- "the idea that the category 'woman' is a fiction and that feminist efforts must be directed toward dismantling this fiction". At face value it holds promise, suggesting the possibility of transcending conceptions of femininity as essential and unchangeable, yet leaves us only with Kristeva's strategy of negative struggle, and as Alcoff notes, "nominalism threatens to wipe out feminism itself":

> What can we demand in the name of women if "women" do not exist and demands in their name simply reinforce the myth that they do? How can we speak out against sexism as detrimental to the interests of women if the category is a fiction? (1988:420)

As Martin (1988:91) recognizes, in spite of her favourable assessment of Foucault, we "...cannot afford to refuse to take a political stance 'which pins us to our sex' for the sake of abstract theoretical correctness"(Ibid.). The post-structuralist challenge to essentialist, mechanical theories of social reproduction is one which feminist theory must take, and is taking, seriously. Our task, however, is to incorporate its insights while rejecting its nihilistic tendencies.

e. Summary

Socialist feminist approaches to social reproduction have been both fruitful and problematic. Aside from the difficulties with social reproduction theory in general, there has been the more fundamental problem for feminists of attempting to squeeze gender into a model ultimately based on the reproduction of class relations. As Barrett (1980;29) remarks:

> The problem carries with it a contentious history of dispute between Marxism and feminism, and in every formulation we hear the echoes of voices on either side claiming analytic primacy for class or for gender.

While the domestic labour debates put women on the Marxist agenda, allegiance to an orthodox interpretation of Marx's political economy closed off a number of important questions, particularly around the relation of women to men. Retaining the primacy of the reproduction of capitalism as determinant in reproducing women's oppression leads to the assumption of a

conspiracy between the owners of capital and all men. Structuralist Marxism's location of women's oppression in both an economic base and a relatively autonomous superstructure has generated volumes of insightful and creative work on the four 'structures' outlined by Mitchell, but generally allowed the gender blind analysis of production to retain primacy, adding on patriarchal relations in some version of 'dual systems' theory. In spite of the insights into the ideological reproduction of masculinity and femininity provided by the psychoanalytic theory, the resulting picture is one of a relatively universal and unchangeable structuring of both psyche and society with little room for human agency in effecting change. All of these approaches tend to recycle the subject-structure dualism. Post-structuralist interpretations correctly criticize the 'reproductive logic' implied by previous approaches, but abandoning the problematic altogether abandons its political import.

Each approach has uncovered important problems and introduced useful concepts, but each has also generated unresolved problems which are important to social theory in general. It is clear that socialist-feminist theory needs to articulate more clearly the role of human agency in both reproducing and transforming structures of domination, and to ground more firmly its insights as a basis for socialist transformation. To do so first requires a more thorough

examination of some of the current theoretical impasses.

1.4 Towards Reconstruction

Socialist-feminist theory has inherited a number of problems in attempts to theorize the reproduction of gender inequality in capitalist society, and has created a few problems of its own. After a brief review of some key debates in socialist feminist theory, I will suggest how recent critical reconstructions of the problematic of social reproduction may be instructive in more adequately developing a feminist theory which can inform emancipatory practice.

a. Current Dilemmas in Socialist Feminist Theory

The debates between Pat and Hugh Armstrong (1983; 1984) and Patricia Connelly in Studies in Political Economy and between Michele Barrett (1984) and Brenner and Ramas (1984) in New Left Review illustrate that while consensus has been reached on some issues, other issues remain contentious. A degree of consensus seems to have been reached on the need to abandon the dual systems approach, with its positing of capitalism and patriarchy as relatively autonomous, yet mutually supportive and interrelated systems of domination. There appears to be general agreement that analytically separating the ideological and the material is fruitless, and that capitalism and patriarchy are so interwoven as to be one and the same system -- capitalist patriarchy, to use Eisenstein's (1979) term. Yet while there is agreement on the

linkage of capitalism and patriarchy into a seemingly unitary system of domination, integrated through the sexual division of labour, two key debates have remained at an impasse.

The first debate revolves around the level of analysis at which the sexual division of labour is essential to the reproduction of capitalism. The interpretation most faithful to an orthodox base/superstructure metaphor sees the insertion of a sexual division of labour as necessary at the most abstract level of analysis. For example, Armstrong and Armstrong (1983:39) argue that:

> ...because capitalism is premised on free wage labour-- on the separation of most aspects of workers' reproduction from the production process-- women's reproductive capacities separate them out of the production process for childbearing work. This establishes the basis for an elaboration of sex differences, a sexual division of labour which subordinates women and pervades all levels of human activity under capitalism.

While I think that Armstrong and Armstrong are correct to insist that the sexual division of labour is integral to the capitalist mode of production, they seem to neglect that concepts such as 'the capitalist mode of production', or the 'sexual division of labour' do not exist per se. They are abstractions of principles from the level of historically situated, concrete social formations. Others, such as Jenson (1986), Omvedt (1986), Riley (1983) and Walby (1986), argue for a more historically contingent approach which emphasizes the variability, across time and space, of the social construction

of the gendered division of labour. For example, Jenson's (1986) investigation into the 'social construction of maternity' in Britain and France over the last century demonstrates clearly the great variation across social formations of both popular and policy expectations about the proper amount, location, and effect of women's participation in the paid labour force in relation to their maternal role. She concludes that:

> The need of capital for reproduction of the labour force, and the state's activities to create and maintain the nation, are dependent upon the stage of capitalism as well as particular patterns of social relations (Jenson, 1986:41).

This points to the need to treat abstractions as <u>abstractions</u>, not ossified laws for which history can only provide illustration.[18] It is not a case of locating explanations for women's subordination exclusively at one level of analysis or another, but of retaining an awareness of the historical nature of totalities.

The second key debate, which is related to the problems of levels of analysis and the debates around theory vs. history, involves the relative weights that should be given to the material and the ideological in theorizing the reproduction of both sexual inequality and capitalism. One of the major

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[18]Sayer (1987) provides a detailed treatment of this theme in Marxism. See Omvedt (1986) and Joan Smith (1983) for critiques of abstraction in theories of capitalist-patriarchy.

problems with structuralist-Marxist influenced feminism was the relegation of patriarchy to the ideological sphere, retaining the centrality of class at the economic level -- the 'dual systems' problem. This was the logical result of earlier interpretations of the mode of production as material production. The theoretical problem became how to connect patriarchal relations to capitalist production relations, rather than seeing them as part of capitalist production relations from the start. Armstrong and Armstrong (1983) argue for the inclusion of the sexual division of labour as integral to capitalist development and thus refute both the term 'patriarchy' and 'dual systems' theories, but they suggest we can accomplish this by 'stretching' already strained abstract principles of capitalist organization. I will argue that a more fundamental reconstruction of historical materialism is required if we are to understand, which I think we must, gender domination as irreducible to the logic of capital.

The sexual division of labour is crucial to understanding women's subordination, but reproduced patterns of gender domination, and the salience of gender in the construction of the differentiated subjects of capitalism, cannot be reduced to this. We need to see women not only in their relationship to an economic system, but also in relation to men and to each other. Thus, whether we call it 'patriarchy' or anything else, we need a theory of gender to provide a way of organizing our

insights into women's oppression. This does not imply, as structuralist Marxism tended to, that capitalist laws of motion provide the base, and with patriarchal ideologies filling in the superstructure. Rather, it recognizes that any historical social formation is a totality, in which the psychological, the economic, the personal and the political are inseparable. It is not a question of primacy between class and gender, or between production and consciousness, but an articulation of the material, ideological and psychodynamic base of each, their dynamics, and perhaps most importantly, how struggle on both ideological and material levels may be related. Feminist theory is vital to this project, and it is through analysis of this sort that it can best contribute to the development of socialist theory.

b. Emergent Critical Approaches to Social Reproduction

As I have suggested in an earlier paper (Marshall,1988), the Marxist paradigm of production, from which most theories of social reproduction have developed, needs to be transcended if we are to adequately theorize gender in the critique of capitalism. A number of emergent critical approaches which are influenced by -- yet substantially reconstructive of -- Marxism, may be instructive in this project. In general, they incorporate a shift in focus from the mode of production to processes of legitimation, the abandonment of an essentialist notion of structure, and a distinct attempt to overcome the

dualism of subject and structure.[19]

The critique of earlier conceptions of social reproduction has resulted in several recent attempts to recover its dialectical potential as a theoretical orientation to the analysis of advanced capitalist societies. Critical approaches to social and cultural reproduction in the sociology of education (for example, Giroux, 1983a,1983b; Willis,1981a,1981b) and some recent work on gender (for example, Burton,1985; Connell,1983,1987) have sought to reconceptualize social reproduction in terms of the continuous constitution, reproduction, and transformation of the configuration of elements of the social formation.

1. 'Resistance' theories in education

It was in the 'new' sociology of education that the debate between theories of social and cultural reproduction emerged most clearly in the 1970's. The attempt to overcome

[19]The terminology of what constitutes 'critical theory' is problematic, as this tradition has often been referred to as 'Western Marxism' (see for example, Agger (1979)). While the term "critical theory" is most closely associated with theoretical work in the tradition of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, I use it here to identify a broader range of work which has developed under the influence of, yet outside of, orthodox Marxism. Piccone (1980:21) summarizes the fundamental objective of this tradition as seeking "...to come to terms with the new emerging forms of organized capitalism and to radically reconstitute the project of human emancipation that in traditional Marxist theory had been projected as the proletarian revolution." See Morrow (1985) for an excellent overview of this work in its relation to Canadian sociology.

the impasses of that debate has resulted in the development of what have been termed 'resistance theories'. Reproduction theory in education has its roots in Althusser's identification of educational systems as ideological state apparatuses, and this was the grounding for Bowles and Gintis' (1976) "correspondence theory", which posited a structural relationship between the social organization of the school with the social organization of production. The education system, they argued, functions to prepare youth to take their places as workers, and thus is crucial in social reproduction. The culturalist moment in educational theory was represented primarily by Bourdieu (1977) and Bernstein (1977). Here the shift in focus was from social reproduction to cultural reproduction -- less emphasis on the reproduction of the working class than on the reproduction of the dominant culture. There are sharp differences between these theories of social and cultural reproduction, but what emerges as a commonality is "a one-sided emphasis on the systemic and deterministic aspects of social and cultural reproduction in capitalist societies. Not only are the voluntaristic aspects of struggle missing here, but also any hope of social change" (Giroux,1981:12) Resistance theories grew out of these inadequacies of theories of social and cultural reproduction, are more concerned with education as a basis for transformation and exhibit a more crucial distance from seeing class domination as the only mode

of oppression in capitalist societies. As Morrow and Torres (1988:40) characterize this turn in educational research, it represents a move toward:

> ...more open models of social and cultural reproduction which attempt to examine manifestations of resistance, draw out the significance of the cultural dimensions of reproduction, provide the basis for an understanding of the subjects of the educational process and their relationship to the curriculum, and attempt to restore the dialectic between correspondence and contradiction.

O'Brien (1984) has suggested the utility of this sort of educational theory's development of 'hegemonic analysis' for feminist theory, and its appropriation of certain key themes in critical theory warrants closer attention.

2. New approaches to gender

A different tack in the critique of earlier conceptions of social and cultural reproduction has been taken by some recent works specifically dealing concerned with gender. Representative here are Australian theorists Burton (1985) and Connell (1983:1987).

Connell (1983) takes a strong position against 'the' theory of social reproduction (grouping Althusser, Lefebvre and Bourdieu together), suggesting that it is inherently functionalist and holds little liberatory potential.[20] In

[20]A more useful typology of reproduction theories is developed by Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) who distinguish between the economic-reproductive, cultural-reproductive and state-hegemonic models, suggesting that each has specific strengths and weaknesses.

adopting the concept of social reproduction, he charges Marxist-feminist reproduction theory with tying itself "in extraordinary knots, trying to extract explanatory principles from Lacan, Levi-Strauss, semiotics...with...a complete lack of success" (Connell,1983:55). He charges that:

> (T)he concept of 'social reproduction' ...makes sense only if an invariant structure is postulated at the start. History enters the theory as something *added on* to the basic cycle of structural reproduction (Connell,1987;44).

Connell's critique is valid only if we accept his tarring of any theory which speaks of social and cultural reproduction with the same functionalist, structuralist brush. His insistence that we see social structure as being constantly *constituted* as opposed to being constantly *reproduced* is convincing, but only if we retain the notion from theories of reproduction that patriarchal-capitalist social structures have historically been constituted in rather a consistent manner, without <u>total</u> contingency. It would otherwise make little sense to speak, as Connell himself does, of "a historically composed gender order" (1987;159).

Despite my reservations about his abandonment of the concept of social reproduction altogether, I concur with many of Connell's criticisms of earlier approaches, and accept many of the arguments he advances for the development of a more adequate theory. In particular, attention needs to be paid to two of his arguments. First, it is essential to see that

"Gender is *part* of the 'relations of production', and has been from the start; it is not just mixed up in their reproduction" (1987;45). Secondly, social reproduction needs to be viewed as 'an object of strategy':

> Groups that hold power do try to reproduce the structure that gives them their privilege. But it is always an open question whether, and how, they will succeed (Ibid.:44).

Burton (1985) shares Connell's misgivings about the functionalist implications of much social reproduction theory as it has been applied to the study of women's subordination, but she remains committed to the utility of the concept of social reproduction itself. Her concern is with the 'changing but enduring' nature of sexual inequalities: "I am concerned with the ways in which these are reproduced, because unless we understand the basis of their durability in rapidly changing circumstances, effective political interventions to eliminate them will be neither adequately formulated nor acted upon" (Burton, 1985:xii). Her strategy is to develop a framework for 'an extended theory of social reproduction', which sees gender and class as "so inextricably linked that neither assumes a primary or determining place", and which refocuses attention from the mode of production to processes of legitimation in capitalist social formations. In doing so, she brings together a number of important insights from various strands of feminist thought, taking into account the state, biological

reproduction, educational systems, the institution of the family and the labour process, but in the end, falls back on 'social reproduction' as an explanatory concept. Yet, as Giddens (1981:64) stresses, social reproduction is not an explanatory concept in itself, but rather something which requires explanation.

1.5 Conclusions: Key Issues

There are several fundamental requirements of a critical socialist-feminist theory if we are to overcome the key problems of previous approaches. An adequate conception of social reproduction must address the questions of what is being reproduced and how is it reproduced. What becomes important is not the reproduction of classes and genders as invariant structures, but the reproduction (or transformation) of key social relationships.

> The stale formalism of mapping separate patriarchies and capitalisms and the points of their intersections must give way to a dynamic sense of how both are taken up in the creative practice of the production and reproduction of material and social life in determinate sites and how this -- not their own formalisms -- helps to reproduce both (Willis, 1981b:51).

A renewed emphasis on human agency refocuses the analysis to the way in which human actors seek to come to terms with immediate circumstances and problems, the way in which structures circumscribe their possibilities for action, and how in turn, they are reproduced by that action. Reproduction

becomes an outcome of strategies situated in a web of power relationships: "...if reproduction predominates in a given case, it is because that side of things has won out in a contest with other tendencies, not because it is guaranteed by some sociological law" (Connell et al, 1982:190). Only if we accept this can we begin to speak of the possibility of transformation.

In reviewing the literature on sexual inequalities and their reproduction, and the requirements for a more adequate theory, there are some central issues which appear to need resolution before we can begin the task of reconstruction. A detailed analysis of these issues forms the basis of the remaining chapters.

First, there is the need to distinguish analytically between the gender division of labour and the differentiation of social life into public and private, or domestic, domains. Historically, and in much recent theory, they have been conflated, with women being associated with the domestic sphere and men with the public sphere. While a public/domestic division and a gendered division of labour may be contingently related, they are not organically so. This issue is crucial to the question of 'what is being reproduced'. I will suggest that what is being reproduced is not a structured division, but an implicit relational asymmetry. An examination of the gendered division of labour reveals that it is <u>not</u> a remnant of

precapitalist social organization which capitalism took over and used for its own purposes (ie. its "reproduction"). It is actively created and recreated in both 'public' and 'private'. The duality of woman/domestic/private and man/political/public rests upon assumptions which do not stand up to critical examination, and its investigation requires reassessment of the view of 'modernity' that underlies much socialist and socialist feminist theory.

The second issue is the need to analyze class and gender inequality in terms of both a gendered logic of accumulation and processes of legitimation. As I have suggested, if we are to treat gender as central in the critique of capitalism, the Marxist paradigm of production must be transcended. As Benhabib and Cornell (1987:2) point out, the concept of production is based on a subject-object model and cannot fully grasp the intersubjective nature of social life. Identity formation is not solely derived from a position in the production process. Lines of inquiry must be opened around the relationship of subject and structure, culture and ideology, and 'myth' and 'fact' in the constitution of social reality, and the construction and regulation of individual and collective identities. These issues are all crucial to the question of 'how' something is reproduced.

The third issue is the need to identify possibilities for transformation. As outlined above, central to both structural

and psychoanalytic theories of social reproduction is explication of why things don't change. As Aronowitz and Giroux (1985:70) put it, they lack "a language of possibility". As Gordon (1986) notes, this largely results from assigning all the agency to dominant groups. By recognizing both structure and agency on all sides of the power equation, can 'fault lines' in the gender order be identified?

In summary, we need to interrogate some of the central concepts of both socialist and feminist theory, to view them not as the 'subjects of history' themselves (Sayer, 1988), but as "...tools to think with, with a definite historical scope of reference...derived in relation to particular historical conditions, for the purpose of the analysis of concrete situations" (Johnson, cited in Bland et. al., 1979:85). The next chapter will examine one of the most central of these theoretical abstractions -- the gendered division of labour.

CHAPTER 2

RETHINKING THE GENDERED DIVISION OF LABOUR

2.1 Introduction

Theories of social reproduction have been primarily concerned with the reproduction of capitalism, and specifically, capitalist class relations. Just as the social division of labour has been central to the analysis of class inequality, the division of labour by sex has been central to studies of sexual inequality. The allocation and structuring of activities on the basis of sex is a universal phenomenon. As Hartsock (1985:232) notes:

> Women's work in every society differs systematically from men's....This division of labour is the first, and in some societies the only, division of labour; moreover it is central to the organization of the social division of labour more generally.

While all societies differentiate between 'men's work' and 'women's work', there is considerable variation, both historically and culturally, with respect to what tasks are considered appropriate for each sex, and in the degree of rigidity of the sex-typing of various activities. For many theorists, the sexual division of labour is almost synonymous with women's subordination, "...because it appears to express,

embody, and furthermore to perpetuate, female subordination" (Mackintosh, 1981:2). Certainly, understanding the sexual division of labour is crucial to understanding women's oppression, but what is important is how we understand this division. In this chapter, I want to discuss a number of issues related to this problem. First, I will review some empirical data on divisions of labour between men and women -- between waged and unwaged labour, within waged labour, and within unwaged labour. Secondly, I will review some of the theoretical work which has sought to explain the persistence of these divisions, and which has underscored the fact that it is a gendered division of labour with which we must be concerned, and not, strictly speaking, a sexual one.[1] Finally, I will attempt to draw out the theoretical significance of some of the trends in the gendered division of labour to the overall problematic of the reproduction of gender inequality. Linking the analysis to the recent gender/work/class debates, I want to

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[1]The 'sexual division of labour' appears to be the preferred term in the literature, in spite of the fact that most of the evidence points to the socially constructed nature of the division of labour. The division of labour in biological reproduction is indeed a sexual division, but as I hope to show in this chapter, the organization of work (both paid and unpaid) is thoroughly gendered -- that is, it has not so much to do with biological sex as it does with the material and ideological placement of the two sexes as unequal genders. Hartsock (1986) argues for retaining the use of 'sexual' to describe the division of labour, "to keep hold of the bodily aspect of existence" (233). I would argue, however, that we cannot experience even the bodily aspects of sex except through the cultural lenses of gender.

demonstrate that the conflation of the division of labour between men and women with a division of social life into 'public' and 'private' spheres is both theoretically and politically untenable. Thus, while Mann (1986:56) contends that "...stratification is now gendered" I will argue that it always has been.

2.2 The Gendered Division of Labour

Early anthropological work established the division of labour between the sexes as a universal, yet variable phenomenon. Since then, many researchers have documented the extent and form of the gendered division of labour in both national and international contexts. In Canada, research has focused primarily on the division between 'men's jobs' and 'women's jobs' in the paid labour market, and on the broader division between paid and unpaid labour, with an emphasis on women's unwaged labour in the home. Less frequently discussed, but also salient, are gendered divisions within unwaged labour.

a. Divisions between waged and unwaged labour

Marsden (1981), taking a poke at the traditional categories of labour market analysis, suggests that those who work only for wages should be considered "secondary workers". In doing so, she neatly drives home the fact that women, as a group, perform substantially more work than men as a group, yet

receive far less in the way of financial compensation.[2] The main reason for this, of course, is that most of women's work is unwaged.

As Figure 2.1 shows, women have become increasingly involved in waged labour during the twentieth century, significantly closing the gap between their participation in the paid labour force and men's. Women have accounted for the bulk of labour force growth, with male labour force participation showing a decline. Table 2.1 shows the variations in participation rates when age and marital status are taken into account. Notably, the smallest differences in labour force participation rates are for single men and women, and the largest are for married men and women. It is here that we see most clearly the movement of many women into unpaid domestic labour, while men remain in the waged labour force. There is clearly a life-cycle pattern to the movement of women between unwaged labour and participation in both unwaged and waged labour.

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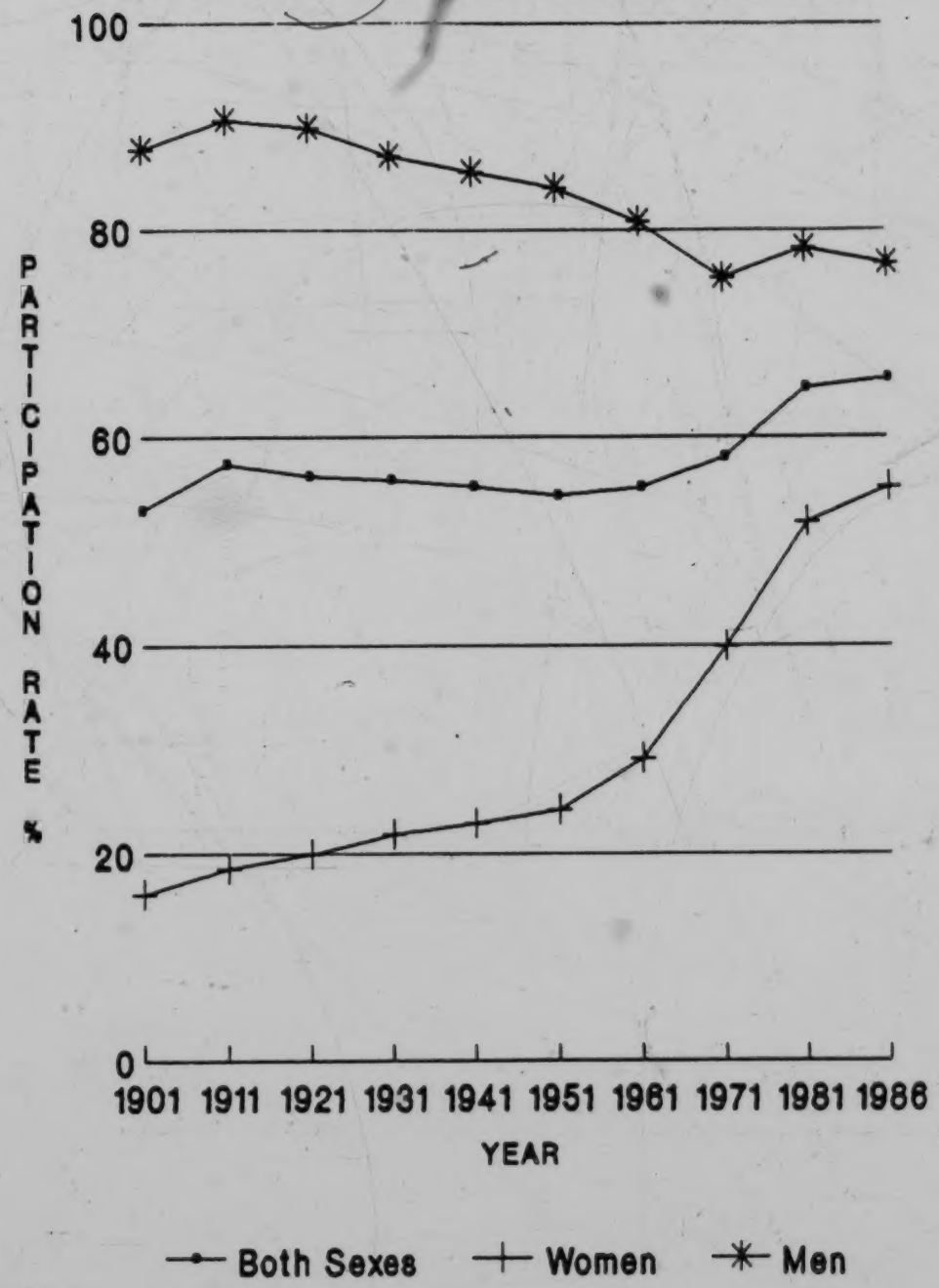
[2]The United Nations estimates that women do 75% of the world's work, receive 10% of the world's salaries, and own 1% of the world's land (Hofmann-Nemiroff,1987:533).

FIGURE 2.1
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY SEX, 1901-1986



Source: Data compiled from Krahn and Lowe (1988:40)

TABLE 2.1
PARTICIPATION RATES, 1985
BY AGE, SEX AND MARITAL STATUS

MARITAL STATUS AND AGE	WOMEN	MEN	TOTAL
SINGLE	65.7	71.1	68.7
15-24	63.0	67.0	65.2
25-34	85.3	89.0	87.5
35-44	81.8	85.2	83.7
45-64	67.1	64.1	65.5
MARRIED	54.7	80.9	67.9
15-24	69.6	91.5	77.1
25-34	66.9	96.1	80.8
35-44	67.9	96.9	82.7
45-64	45.6	83.5	65.4
OTHER*	36.4	58.6	42.3
15-24	63.2	85.2	67.3
25-34	72.5	92.4	78.7
35-44	77.0	91.0	81.8
45-64	51.0	72.1	57.1
TOTAL	54.3	76.7	65.2
15-24	64.6	70.1	67.4
25-34	70.7	94.0	82.2
35-44	70.0	95.4	82.7
45-64	47.8	81.4	64.3

*includes separated, divorced and widowed

SOURCE: Labour Canada, 1987

Marsden (1981:58-9) sums up the career of the "main worker":

> The typical main worker enters main work after the completion of his/her education and, throughout life until death, combines main and secondary work, sometimes exclusively in one or the other but always, potentially, in both. The worker typically begins as a secondary worker only....at marriage or co-habitation, this person becomes a main worker contributing both in secondary labour for about 40 hours a week and in the domestic and community sphere about 30 or more hours a week....Perhaps the most important contribution of the main worker's life is the preparation of the next generation of workers. This used to be considered main work on its own, but increasingly...main workers are also picking up the load of secondary labour. The typical main worker, however...has a clear set of priorities when it comes to contribution to the society and concentrates for several years when children are young on their proper socialization to our society.

While women comprised 42.5% of the paid labour force in 1985 (Labour Canada, 1987), there is no doubt that they constitute the vast majority of unpaid workers. Research on domestic labour shows that women, whether or not they also have paid jobs, remain responsible for the bulk of the work associated with household maintenance and child-rearing. According to Statistics Canada (1985), women not in the paid labour force spend an average of 33 hours a week on housework, shopping and household maintenance. Another 1.3 hours per day are devoted exclusively to child care (not including supervision of children while performing other activities, driving children to lessons, etc.). When women are engaged in paid employment, their total labour time increases, but with some decrease in

unpaid domestic labour time. This decrease in women's unpaid labour time is not matched by a commensurate increase in men's unpaid labour in household where both spouses are employed -- Statistics Canada (1985) estimates that men do half as much domestic work as their employed wives. Thus, whether employed outside the home or not, women perform the bulk of unpaid domestic work.

Another area in which women do unwaged work is as "unpaid family workers". Within the labour force as a whole, women are six times as likely to be employed as unpaid family workers (Statistics Canada, 1988). This is particularly apparent in the agricultural sector. Two-thirds of unpaid family workers in Canadian agriculture are women (Smith, 1987:137), accounting for 38.3% of all women reporting an agricultural occupation (Labour Canada, 1987). Because the distinction between farm work and housework maybe unclear, and because many farm women may not report their work as unpaid family workers, these figures are likely an underrepresentation of women's unpaid labour in the agricultural sector (Smith, 1987: 149). Clearly, "women's agricultural labour has long been one of the hidden costs of food production in Canada" (Ibid:130).

Another form of unwaged labour performed almost exclusively by women is that involved in maintaining what has been termed the "two-person" career (Papanek,1973). Whether she is typing papers for an academic, entertaining a

businessman's colleagues, posing for photographs with a politician, or straightening out the books for a small business, the wife who is 'incorporated' into her husband's career (Finch, 1983) performs labour which is unwaged and unrecognized, even by the "unpaid family worker" category provided by the Census. It is difficult to estimate the number of hours involved in such labour, as it varies widely and has received relatively little attention in the literature.[3] Yet it is work nonetheless.

No discussion of unwaged work would be complete without mentioning the vast amount of volunteer work done in the community by women. According to a 1980 Statistics Canada survey of volunteer work, women comprise the majority of volunteer workers, particularly in the areas of health, education and social services. In 1980, the estimated value of volunteer work was two billion dollars a year, or 1.3% of all wages and salaries (Ross, cited in Armstrong, 1984:132). As government restraint forces hospitals, schools and social service agencies to cut back on expenditures, it is likely that previously paid jobs for women will increasingly become unpaid, volunteer jobs (Armstrong, 1984:130-132).

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[3]Notable exceptions are Kanter (1977) on manager's wives, Fowlkes (1980) on two-person careers in medicine and academia, and Finch (1983) on the phenomenon in general.

To summarize, then, there is an unequal distribution of total labour time between men and women, with women as a group performing more labour overall than men as a group. Men perform a greater proportion of waged labour, and women perform a greater proportion of unwaged labour, as domestic workers, as unpaid family workers, as labourers contributing directly to their husband's paid work and as volunteers.

b. Divisions Within Waged Labour

Whether we look at occupations, industries, hours of work or wage levels, persistent divisions between men and women are found in the paid labour market. By occupation, women tend to be located within a narrow range of jobs, most notably in clerical, sales and service work. Table 2.2 shows the distribution of the Canadian labour force by occupation and sex for 1985. Almost 60% of all women in the paid labour force could be found in clerical, sales or service work. Clerical work accounts for the largest proportion of women employees (31.1%), and most of the clerical labour force is female (79.7). By contrast, no one occupational group accounts for such a high proportion of male workers. The occupational group accounting for the largest proportion of men is that of managerial and administrative occupations (12.6% of male workers). A clear pattern of horizontal segregation emerges, with men and women largely found in different occupational groups.

As Table 2.3 shows, within occupations, there is a further vertical segregation, with women concentrated in lower level positions. Even in occupational groups dominated by women, such as teaching and nursing, men occupy a disproportionate number of the 'top' jobs. The rule of thumb that the higher you go up the occupational hierarchy, the fewer women you will find, holds fast in the Canadian labour market. By industry, women are overwhelmingly found in the trade and service industries (Figure 2.2). This is not surprising, given that these sectors have accounted for most job creation during the period in which women's labour market participation has increased, and these expanded opportunities have no doubt drawn many women into the paid labour market.

TABLE 2.2
LABOUR FORCE BY OCCUPATION AND SEX, 1985

OCCUPATION	WOMEN AS % OF OCCUPATION	% DISTRIBUTION WOMEN	% DISTRIBUTION MEN
Managerial and administrative	32.9	8.3	12.6
Natural Sciences, engineering and mathematics	16.3	1.3	5.0
Social sciences	55.6	2.1	1.3
Religion	20.0	0.1	0.4
Teaching	60.7	5.7	2.7
Medicine and health	78.2	8.6	1.8
Artistic and recreational	40.7	1.6	1.7
Clerical	79.7	31.1	5.9
Sales	43.9	9.4	8.9
Service	56.3	18.8	10.8
Agriculture	25.2	2.6	5.7
Fishing, hunting and trapping	*	*	0.5
Forestry and logging	4.9	0.1	1.0
Mining and quarrying	*	*	1.0
Processing	21.1	1.7	4.6
Machining	5.1	0.3	3.5
Product fabricating, assembling	23.6	4.6	10.9
Construction	1.9	0.3	10.0
Transport equipment operating	6.6	0.6	6.1
Materials handling	19.5	1.1	3.3
Other crafts and equipment operating	21.4	0.6	1.7
Unclassified	61.7	1.2	0.6
ALL OCCUPATIONS	42.6	100	100

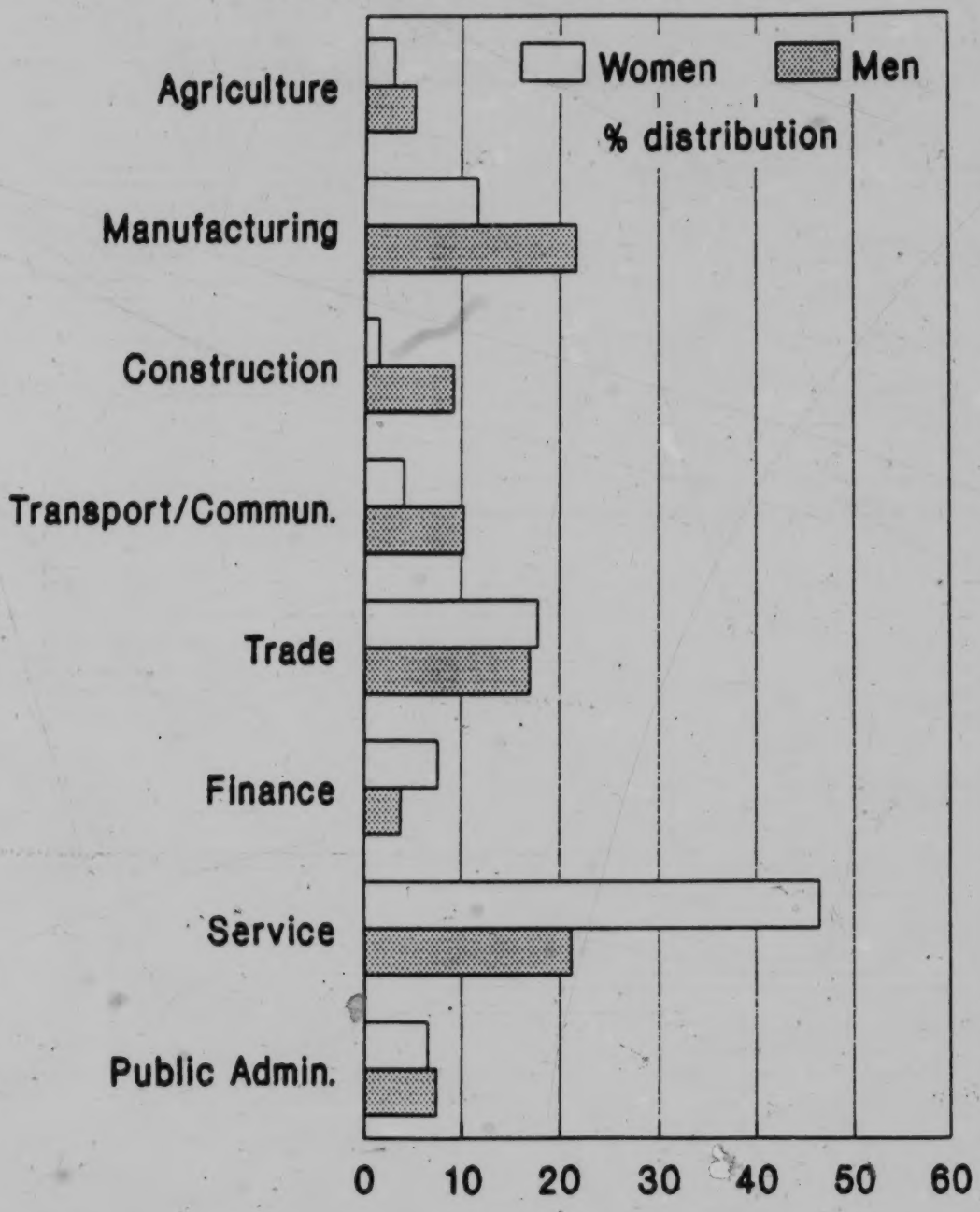
SOURCE: Labour Canada, 1987

TABLE 2.3
GENDER COMPOSITION OF SELECTED OCCUPATIONS, 1981

OCCUPATION	WOMEN AS % OF OCCUPATION
Managerial and administrative	
Government administrators	19.9
General managers and other senior officials	9.4
Administration, teaching and related fields	24.3
Services management occupations	30.4
Teaching	
University teachers	24.4
Secondary school teachers	42.1
Elementary and kindergarten teachers	80.4
Medicine and Health	
Physicians and surgeons	17.2
Nursing supervisors	91.3
Registered nurses	95.4
Dentists	7.9
Dental hygenists and dental assistants	97.8
Clerical	
Supervisors: stenographic and typing	92.2
Secretaries and stenographers	98.9
Supervisors: bookkeeping, accounting	72.6
Bookkeeping and accounting clerks	82.1
Supervisors: office, dataprocessing machine op.	55.7
Office and dataprocessing machine operators	75.6
Sales	
Technical sales occupations	10.2
Commercial travellers	10.6
Sales clerks, commodities	57.0
Street vendors and door-to-door sales	65.0
Services	
Police officers and detectives	4.1
Supervisors: food and beverage prep.	45.3
Food and beverage serving occupations	82.1
Housekeepers, servants and related	95.9

SOURCE: Data compiled from Blishen et. al. (1987)

FIGURE 2.2
LABOUR FORCE BY INDUSTRY AND SEX, 1985



SOURCE: Labour Canada (1987)

Looking at hours of work, we find a far greater proportion of women (26.3%) than men (7.6%) in part-time employment. In 1985, women accounted for 71.9% of all part-time workers in Canada (Labour Canada, 1987:23). All of these factors -- occupational and industrial segregation, higher concentration in part-time work -- certainly contribute to the significant difference in wage levels between men and women.

As labour history shows us, significant changes in the gender composition of the labour force tend to come about primarily with changes in technology (Cockburn,1985; Lowe,1987) and/or requirements for new sources of labour as the economy develops and restructures -- good examples here are clerical work (Davies;1982,Lowe;1987), nursing (Garmanikov,1978), and teaching (Prentice;1977). In the current wave of industrial restructuring, we find new developments in the division and redivision of labour which are inherently gendered. Two examples of this sort of gendered 'redivision' that merit mention here are the use of women as a cheap, flexible labour force by 'runaway capital' in the rapidly industrializing third world, and in the move towards more industrial outworking and part-time or casual work in advanced capitalist economies.[4]

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[4]The recently implemented Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement has been the subject of much debate regarding its effect on employment in Canada. It was denounced by women's groups and labour as likely to encourage the movement of capital out of Canada to low-wage areas, such as the southern U.S. and the U.S.-Mexico free trade zone, and as likely to

(continued...)

The term "the new international division of labour" has gained currency in describing the relocation of jobs from the highly industrialized west to newly industrialized, low-wage countries in Asia and Latin America. It is a reversal of the traditional pattern of labour moving to capital. Mitter (1986;9) estimates that between 1971 and 1983, 1.5 million workers, mostly women, lost their jobs in the clothing and textiles industry in Europe and the U.S., while in excess of 2 million women workers found jobs in the clothing and textile industries in the Third World. In the growing microelectronics industries, the labour intensive operations, such as assembly, are being shifted to low-wage countries where women are recruited as the new workers. Pearson (1986) demonstrates the variability, yet underlying similarity, in the use of female labour in low-wage countries as capital seeks to maximize profits through the use of cheap female labour while staying in harmony with the traditional patriarchal ideologies of the culture. Some employers look for women who are childless and may require pregnancy tests as a condition of employment, some prefer women who have had their children and are past

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[4](...continued)
encourage more privatization of services, contracting out, and pressure on wages in Canada. As always, the effects of the industrial reorganization likely to result from the Free Trade Agreement are not gender-neutral. See Cohen (1987) for a more extensive discussion of potential effects on women's work in Canada.

childbearing age, some pay the women's wages to her father or husband, others allow traditional leaders onto the production line to check the modesty of the company uniform. As Pearson concludes, "there are a range of production relations which vary according to the historically determined situation of women in any given situation" (1986;83).

While global economic restructuring is creating new feminized labour markets in the third world, re-division continues in the first world. 'Rationalization' of production processes, the growth of the service sector and privatization of government services are indicative of this gendered re-division of labour. As industry seeks to lower its labour costs, full-time, continuing employment is increasingly supplanted by part-time and/or limited contract employment. In 1985, women held 59.5% of the part-time jobs in manufacturing industries in Canada, while representing only 28.5% of the total labour force in those industries (Labour Canada,1986). Industrial outworking continues to be performed by an overwhelmingly female, and often immigrant female, labour force.[5] In her discussion of the impact of new technologies on

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[5]Little research exists on the extent of out-working in Canada. One exception is Johnson and Johnson (1982) on industrial home sewing. Another relevant study is Mackenzie's (1986) research on 120 self-employed homeworkers in B.C. and Ontario, although they cannot be considered industrial out-workers. The British National Homeworking Study in 1981 estimates homeworkers at approximately 8% of the labour force, with women making up 71% of all homeworkers (Hakim,1988).

women's work, Armstrong (1984;167) suggests that: "There is clearly enormous potential for increasing the number of paid jobs done at home and most of those who will see their work transformed in this way are women". In support of this assertion, she cites "a representative from a major employer of female clerical workers", speaking at a conference in 1982, as claiming "that his company was now in a position to make half of its clerical jobs homework jobs" (Ibid.). Privatization of government services also means a shift from full-time, high wage jobs to part-time, low-wage, and often contractually limited employment done overwhelmingly by women. Post office privatization, for example, has replaced some of the few high-paying jobs for women in rural areas with minimum wage jobs in private enterprises, such as variety and drug stores. Similar trends are apparent in health services, child care, and social services.

In summary, the historically entrenched division of labour between men and women in the paid labour force is continually created, through new divisions and re-divisions as the economy restructures. It cannot be viewed as a division merely 'inherited' by capitalism -- as Connell (1987:102) puts it: "We are dealing not just with the allocation of work, but with the nature and organization of that work". Gender divisions are built into the paid labour market, and continue to shape its development.

c. Divisions within unwaged labour

It is only recently that scholars have taken significant interest in unwaged labour, and it has been suggested that the burgeoning interest in the 'informal' sphere and the 'household economy' is related to the increased importance of male's unwaged labour . As Delphy and Leonard (1986:235) put it: "Only with the recent profound changes in capitalism and the massive rise in male unemployment, with the associated growth in men's involvement in non-market activities, has there been concern with this sector of the economy and a recognition of the vast nature of its scale." Studies of the 'informal economy' and 'household strategies' have focused on the household as a unit which seeks to maximize its resources through a mix of waged and unwaged labour. As the assurance of the availability of waged labour is increasingly threatened by changing economic conditions, the importance of unwaged labour to household survival increases.

We have already noted that women perform the bulk of unwaged labour. Yet, within unwaged labour, there remain distinct divisions between men's work and women's work. Most notably, gendered divisions are entrenched in household work and 'caring' labour.

Household work has not been unaffected by industrial and economic changes. In her historical survey of the impact of technology on household work, Ruth Schwartz Cowan (1983) sums

it up as "more work for mother". The first domestic tasks to be eliminated by their commercialization or innovations in technology were men's tasks -- such as chopping and hauling wood, home shoe-making, butchering, and mending ironware.

> For women, the transition to the industrial order was different. Merchant flour, cast-iron stoves, municipal water, and manufactured boots did not free them from their labours. Insofar as these commodities allowed men and boys to leave their homes, and insofar as these commodities also created new jobs that only women could perform, women were tied even more strongly than they had been before to their cast-iron hearths (Cowan,1983:67).

Men's participation in domestic work continues to be substantially different than that of women's, and not only in the sense that they spend far less time doing it. Berk (1985:9) summarizes the research on the division of labour within the household as noting a distinct male preference in their household work for tasks which are "functionally specific" (ie. they have "identifiable components and well-defined boundaries", such as mowing the lawn), allow discretion in when and how they are performed (such as minor household repairs) or can be construed as "active leisure" (such as gardening or playing with the children). Meg Luxton noted that while the men in her study had increased their time spent on domestic labour in recent years, they tended to take on specific, clearly bounded tasks and rarely participated in pre-task planning:

> For example, a number of men did the grocery shopping on a regular basis but they insisted that

> the woman draw up the basic list of things needed. Some men would do the laundry, if all the dirty clothes were previously collected and sorted and if the necessary soap and bleach were at hand (1986:45).

Luxton also noted a distinct male preference for jobs that involved working with machinery, such as vacuuming and cooking that involved use of a food processor or microwave oven. Cockburn's (1985:218) research indicates that "...technology is just as significant a factor in the division of labour at home as it is at work", and she suggests that there is much gender-based ideological construction of what technology is considered appropriate to women (eg. sewing machines) and what is appropriate to men (eg. power drill). Thus, domestic labour becomes gender-divided in terms of the specificity, discretion, and perceived level of technological skill attached to the task.

Unwaged 'caring' labour[6] remain almost entirely the domain of women. Graham (1983:13) defines caring as "...that range of human experiences which have to do with feeling concern for, and taking charge of, the well-being of others". While much domestic labour, such as cooking and doing laundry, can be construed of as 'taking charge of the well-being of others', the notion of 'caring labour' implies more than the performance

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[6] 'Caring' labour tends to be women's work when it is waged work as well -- witness the vast majority of paid child-care, health and social service workers who are women.

of certain tasks that enhance the well-being of others. 'Caring' is inextricably intertwined with traditional conceptions of femininity and with the moral interpretations of what constitutes a 'good woman' (Matthews,1984; Ungerson,1983). As 'unwaged' labour, caring manifests itself most noticably as the responsibility of women for the well-being of other members of their family, and in particular, dependent members, such as children and ill or elderly parents. That the state recognizes the need for maternity leave, but not paternity or parental leave, bears witness to the deeply held assumption that care of infants and small children is best entrusted to those who physically bear them. That the state does not recognize the need for leave from paid employment to care for other types of dependents bears witness to the difficulty we have in recognize caring as labour. The ideology of familialism defines caring as love, not labour. As Dalley (1988) notes, men are expected to care about, (but not care for), by providing the physical setting and financial resources for caring labour to take place -- labour usually performed by his wife. They may participate in that labour through the performance of certain tasks, but as with domestic labour in general, the responsibility belongs to women. As a remarkable example of this type of gendered division in caring labour, Luxton (1986:46) notes that men referred to 'babysitting' their own children, a term that women never used.

d. Summary

It is clear that gender divisions are integral to the social division of labour in general. Whether we look at the division between waged and unwaged labour, or within waged or unwaged labour, gender persists as the main 'organizer' of work. Gendered divisions of labour do not seem to respect any neat division between 'public' and 'private', but run through all spheres. Nor are they 'feudal relics' (Corrigan, 1979), but are actively and continuously created and recreated, both in 'public' and 'private'. This recognition has great significance for theorizing the gendered division of labour. As I will demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter, prevailing theories of the division of labour, and of the gender, work and class relationship are fundamentally flawed by some of their basic assumptions. I will argue that they have tended: a) to rest on a relatively narrow conception of 'labour', b) to neglect the degree to which gender divisions shape both the material and ideological forms that the division of labour takes, c) to 'read back into history' (Smith, 1985) the separation of gender and economic processes, and thus reify both the public-private dualism and its coincidence with a gendered division of labour.

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives on the Gendered Division of Labour

While descriptive accounts of the division of labour between men and women abound, adequate explanations for these divisions are harder to come by. For the most part, sociological and economic studies of work have laboured under traditional assumptions about "sex-roles" and, in particular, 'work' and 'family' as opposing spheres, with women placed squarely in the latter. In doing so, they tend to mistake the consequences of the situation for its causes. Clearly indictable on this account are the functionalist sociological account of Parsons, and the neoclassical economic approach. Yet these politically conservative approaches are not alone in their failings -- much Marxist-influenced scholarship has replicated these assumptions in analyzing the division of labour solely from the point of view of the 'needs of capital'. As Milkman (1982:366) concludes, "...an adequate theoretical account of the continuous reproduction of job segregation by sex in capitalist societies has yet to be developed".

Explanations of the gendered division of labour can be grouped into three broad categories, on the basis of where they locate the key processes which produce this division:

a. in forces operating outside the labour market

b. in forces within the capitalist labour market

c. in an interplay of forces outside and inside the labour market

a. Extra-market forces

Of the approaches which target forces operating outside the wage labour market as primary in producing the gendered division of labour, the sociological account of Talcott Parsons and neo-classical economics' human capital theory figure prominently.

The Parsonian view of role differentiation in the family must be placed in the context of Parson's attempt to explain a variety of macro and micro level processes within a unified theoretical framework. Parsons was largely concerned with structural differentiation in industrial societies, and the individual-society link[7] via processes of socialization and status attainment. The family becomes central to this analysis as an institution which performs certain functions which contribute to social stability. Parsons' analysis of the domestic division of labour in the 1950's saw it as a 'natural' consequence of 'role differentiation', which created a necessary interdependence among family members, contributing to the stability of the family as a social unit. Drawing heavily on Bales' small group research, he posited two distinct roles

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[7]Parson's theorizing of the gendered division of labour in relation to the individual-society relationship is particularly important. The salience of the individual-society relationship as it has been theorized in both classical and contemporary sociological theory, and the problems this poses for feminist theory will be explored in Chapter 3.

as necessary for small group functioning -- the instrumental and expressive. The instrumental role is externally oriented towards goal-attainment and adaptation to the environment, while the expressive role is internally oriented towards integration and tension-management. It is via this role differentiation that the family successfully articulates to the larger society while maintaining its own equilibrium. While it would be theoretically possible for either the male or female to perform either role, Parsons suggested that women's biological role in child-bearing naturally predisposes them to the expressive role:

> In our opinion the fundamental explanation of the allocation of the roles between the biological sexes lies in the fact that the bearing and early rearing of children established a strong presumptive primacy of the relation of mother to the small child and this in turn establishes a presumption that the man who is exempted from these biological functions, should specialize in the alternative instrumental direction (Parsons, 1955:23).

Parsons' primary concern was with the 1950's American nuclear family. It is expected that the adult male is the only member of the family with an occupational role, and through this instrumental, occupational role he links the family unit to the larger society, by providing economically for the other family members, and by determining the social status of the family as a whole. The adult female's 'expressive' role is concerned with domestic maintenance, care of children, and emotional support. Parsons was not unaware that women engaged in wage

labour, but did not see this as invalidating his analysis, as the type of job a woman is likely to have "...tends to be of a qualitatively different type and not a status which seriously competes with that of her husband as the primary status-giver or income earner" (Parsons,1955:14). Thus, she continues to be defined in terms of the expressive role.

What is significant in the Parsonian analysis is the splitting off of women from economic processes. He not only ignores the economic implications of women's wage labour, but of their domestic labour as well. Women's role in the family becomes one of cultural, not economic import (Beechey, 1987:21). Once this "theoretical sleight of hand" is accomplished, it is not difficult, as Middleton (1974:180) suggests, to deny that women constitute a subordinate group at all. On the contrary, they fulfil a necessary and complementary role in a complex, structurally differentiated cultural system -- "different but equal".

As married women's participation in wage labour greatly increased in the post-war period in most Western nations, the emphasis in mainstream sociology began to focus on the 'role strain' of married women in the work force. The employed woman, and in particular the employed mother, became ideologically constructed as a social problem. Feldberg and Glenn (1984) neatly capture this in their critique of the treatment of women in the sociology of work. They identify a

tendency for studies of male workers to be conducted within a "job model" -- basic social relationships, social position, and socio-political attitudes are determined by work. For women, a "gender model" is used, assuming their family position to be the primary determinant. The latter approach, in studies of women in paid employment, tends to "...emphasize the strains for women and their families resulting from women's 'two jobs', while giving little consideration to the impacts of conditions of women's employment in specific jobs" (1984:33) In addition, Beechey (1978) critiques studies of "women's two roles" on the ground that they share the functionalist preoccupation with normative expectations. The problem becomes "reduced to individual role conflicts, and no explanation is provided of the foundations of these role conflicts within the organization of society" (172).[8]

'Human capital theory', while more popular in economics than sociology, has maintained a strong ideological foothold in "explaining" women's subordinate position in the labour market.[9] Firmly rooted in functionalist assumptions about sex-

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[8]The Alberta government has provided a recent example of this type of thinking as the basis for policy formation in "Person to Person: An Economic Dialogue on Economic Equity for Women" (Government of Alberta, 1989).

[9]For a recent journalistic example, see the two-part column on the wage gap by Barry Bien in the Edmonton Journal, "Poorly balanced gender politics" (November 20, 1988) and "It is a reality that husbands need to earn more for family" (November 27, 1988).

role differentiation, it suggests that women accumulate less human capital -- qualities such as training, experience and career commitment which are rewarded in the market -- because they prefer to invest their time and energy in the expressive role within the family. Because their primary interest is their current, or expected, family role, they are less concerned with building up human capital, and "choose" jobs which require less training, mobility, and commitment, and which provide less opportunity for advancement and lower wages. Such a theory sits well with the ideology of a meritocracy, and is reflected in suggestions that women need only to build up their human capital to compete on an equal basis with men in the labour market. It sits less well with a more adequate analysis of the operation of the labour market, which suggests that women receive less return for their investment in human capital than men do, that the wage gap is largest in occupations with the lowest human capital requirements, and that men and women are constructed as crucially different labour forces.

b. Forces within the Labour Market

The failures of human capital theory have led to some version of segmented labour market theory as the new orthodoxy for explaining gender segregation in the labour market. The basis of segmented labour market theory is that the existence of divisions among the working class and within particular

workforces contributes to the development of capitalism as it facilitates employer control over their workforce. For example, Edwards (1979), in examining the changing structure of the U.S. labour force, argues that three distinct labour markets have emerged: the primary, the subordinate primary and the secondary. These labour market segments are characterized by different labour processes, with varying levels of skill, wages, job security, and different types of control. According to Edwards, race and sex differences among workers are used by employers to divide the working class, as women are increasingly directed into secondary labour markets with low security and rewards. MacDonald (1981) suggests that it was easier for capital to introduce altogether new labour power than to downgrade primary labour market workers, and this expanded employment opportunities for women in the secondary labour market. While segmented labour market theory increases our understanding, from the system point of view, of the persistence of non-competing male and female labour forces, it is not without its problems. Faulty specification of labour market segments, for example, may mask important male-female differences within segments. Dex (1985) points out that in Edward's schema, secretaries, nurses and craft workers are in the same labour market segment as managers and doctors! More importantly, it has difficulty adequately explaining, rather than simply describing, gender inequality. A number of

historical treatments of the clustering of women's occupations within certain labour market segments have concluded that the segmentation of occupations on the basis of gender was a result of both economic requirements of capital accumulation and patriarchal ideologies. In particular, Milkman (1983;194) notes that gender divisions in industry persisted, "...even in the face of a direct conflict with economic rationality".

Similar problems plague work on the labour process. Labour process studies have taken the workplace as 'contested terrain' (Edwards, 1979) -- the site of struggles between capital and labour, where each seeks to maximize their gain. Yet labour is construed as a gender-neutral category, and as a result, workplace struggles are understood "...as bounded by the physical division between the factory and the outside world" (Greico and Whipp, 1986:117). Feminist critiques of theories of the labour process have suggested that such a clear boundary cannot be drawn, and that 'labour' is inherently a gendered category. Gender not only divides the workforce in a structural sense, but it impinges upon our conceptualizations of skill (Phillips and Taylor, 1986), the use of technology (Cockburn, 1985: Hacker,1989), and forms of authority and control (Kanter, 1977: Lown, 1983) in the workplace. Thomas (1982; 87) suggests that gender differences are "...more than merely ideological distinctions used to fragment politically an otherwise homogenous working class", and thus we must look at

forces external to the labour process as integral in shaping the segmented labour market and the labour process.

c. Interplay of market and non-market forces

Two theoretical 'schools' can be located in this camp -- the socio-economic approach of the Cambridge Labour Studies Group (Craig et. al., 1985; Garnsey et. al., 1985; Humphries and Rubery, 1984; Rubery, 1988) which examines the relationship between 'production' and 'social reproduction'[10], and more explicitly feminist approaches which analyze the relationship between capitalist and patriarchal forces (Delphy, 1984; Hartmann, 1979; Walby,1986).

The approach of the Cambridge Group is an advance over earlier labour market segmentation theory in that it differentiates between the segmentation of the labour market (demand factors) and the segmentation of the labour force (supply factors). There is a recognition that men and women supply their labour on different terms. Thus, "...the labour market position of women is not intrinsically vulnerable but is the result of the role specialization in the family and expectations which follow therefrom" (Garnsey et. al, 1985;59). Because this 'role specialization' in the family

[10]They use the term 'social reproduction' to describe the processes by which "the new generation is produced and prepared for working life, and services are provided to members of the existing labour force which enable them to engage in paid employment" (Garnsey et.al., 1985;57).

assigns the primary responsibility for family care and household maintenance to women, with the expectation that they will be party to income-sharing with a male wage-earner, "...many employers assume that women in general have lower income needs and lesser attachment to their jobs than men, even where in individual cases this assumption is inapplicable" (Ibid.;60). As Craig et. al. (1984:95) point out:

> ...men also have specific positions in the family which influence the terms on which they make their labour available on the market: for example, they may need to provide for dependents, and they may be free to work long and flexible hours because they can rely on others to provide the domestic labour they and their dependents require.

Supply and demand factors, then, are mutually conditioning. However, the basis for the extensiveness of 'role specialization' within the family which is so crucial in segmenting labour supply remains largely unanalyzed in this model. Feminist 'dual systems' theories have tackled this question by examining patriarchy as the basis for this division of labour within the family.

The hallmark of feminist 'dual systems' theorizing is Hartmann's (1981) assertion that "capitalist development creates the places for a hierarchy of workers, but traditional Marxist categories cannot tell us who will fill which places. Gender and racial hierarchies determine who fills the empty places". The concept of patriarchy is deployed to explain the origins of the gender hierarchy which fills the lowest spots in

the capitalist hierarchy with women. Patriarchy, argues Hartmann, is based in men's control over women's labour, both paid and unpaid. Men's exclusionary practices in the labour market segregate women into low-wage jobs, enforcing their dependence on a male wage and thus their continued responsibility for domestic labour, and keeps them subordinate in the family. At the same time, men's control over women's labour in the domestic sphere reinforces their secondary status in the labour market, ensuring that the vicious circle continues. This relationship between capitalism and patriarchy benefits both men and capital. One takes care of demand, the other supply. According to Hartmann (1981), among others, patriarchy and capitalism find their common interest served by the 'family wage', which facilitates both occupational segregation and the assignment of domestic labour to women. Once again, the 'great conspiracy' between capitalists and men raises its head.

d. Summary

It is clear that gender has been a key factor in the development of the social division of labour, whether that labour is waged or unwaged. It is also clear that the most common explanation for this has been the identification of a link between the sexual division of labour in biological reproduction, the physical separation of home and work through industrialization, and the resulting gendered social division

of labour. At the risk of an oversimplification, the basic argument can be summarized as follows: the fact that women physically bear children and have the capacity to breastfeed 'naturally' singles them out for child-rearing. This renders them less able to sell their labour in the 'public' sphere, and thus they must labour in 'private', for a male labourer who will share his wage with her. This basic relationship holds for whatever the theoretical formulation which is built on it. For Parsons, it results in a complementarity of 'expressive' and 'instrumental' roles in the family. For neoclassical economists, it accords women lower levels of human capital when they do enter the waged labour force, as their primary attachment is to the home. For Marxists, it serves the needs of the capitalist system by ensuring not only the efficient 'private' reproduction of workers, but a reserve army of labour. For feminists, it lays the basis for women's dependency on men as their primary source of livelihood -- not for reasons of nature, but for the resulting patriarchal control of women's sexuality, and reproductive and productive labour. Central to most theoretical formulations is the association of women's labour with the private sphere and men's labour with the public sphere, and this division is, for most accounts, what is being reproduced. Thus, women's labour is undervalued because it occurs in the realm of 'reproduction' (biological reproduction, and reproduction of the labour

force), which is outside of the relations of production proper, or it mimics reproductive work in the labour force. Yet it is the ever familiar formulation of men engaged in production and women in reproduction that I wish to question here. Instead, I will suggest that the 'public man', 'private woman' dualism is an abstraction which cannot be sustained, and that in fact what is being reproduced is the conflation of the sexual division of labour with the public/private division through this abstraction. Nowhere is this conflation more apparent than in the recent debates around the place of gender within class analysis.

2.4 Gender, Work and Class

Class analysis has remained the backbone of stratification theory and research; processes of class formation, empirical specification of class locations, and the potential for class action to transform, rather than reproduce, the underlying structure of class inequality have all been widely debated. Increasingly, the inability of class analysis to deal adequately with gender as a fundamental dimension of inequality in capitalist societies has called into question the adequacy of class-based models of social reproduction. Conventional class analysis has assumed that women derive their class position from that of the male head of the household (as indicated by their occupation). Consequently, the rather confusing label of "women and class analysis" has been given to

discussions of women's position within the family, and in particular, the empirical difficulties of selecting the appropriate unit for class anlysis, given that many women work both inside and outside the home (see for example, Goldthorpe, 1983,1984; Heath and Britten, 1984; Stanworth, 1984). The unit of analysis debate is not primarily methodological, despite the fact that it is often couched in such terms. More accurately, it reflects the theoretical difficulties which result from the conceptual elision of men's work with the public, productive sphere, and women's work with the private, reproductive sphere.

The gender, work and class debates comprise the terrain on which much of the research on the gendered division of labour has been conducted, and there are serious problems with some of its key assumptions. The feminist critique has taken two tacks: a) a critique of existing ways of including women in the debate, and b) a critique of the premises of class analysis itself as adequate for dealing with social inequality. I will discuss each of these in turn.

a. Debates within Class Analysis

Conventional class analysis has taken the male career pattern as typical for purposes of labour market analysis, mobility, and even for deciding what groups will be studied. We thus find Goldthorpe dismissing women as peripheral to the class structure because there work lives are intermittent,

largely part-time, etc. Not only are these assertions empirically questionable, but there is no consideration here of broadening the concept of work altogether. As Abbott and Sapford (1987:2) point out, class theorists are quick to suggest that our class imagery is largely formed by our work experiences, yet are content to suggest that wives not employed in the conventional sense (full-time, out of home, continuous, waged labour) take their consciousness, political imagery, etc. from their husband's work experience. The gender/work/class debates have exacerbated the split between the public sphere of work and the private sphere of the household or family. It is what goes on in the former that gives some sort of class position to the latter. Not enough attention has been paid to reciprocal patterns of influence between the two spheres, let alone moving towards treating the two spheres as concurrent 'moments' in social life. Yet even those attempts to develop new methods of determining women's class position which attempt to take women's work into account tend to replicate the elision of work with the public sphere, by focussing on women's paid work as what needs to be factored into the class equation. They are still primarily aimed at describing a class structure, which exists as a hierarchy of paid occupations, as the structure of inequality. That is, gender enters as a factor in the question of determining a person's class position, but is not taken as an important dimension of inequality in and of

itself. We are thus left with attempts to refine occupational classification schemes to more adequately capture women's occupational experience, and hence class position, or attempts to develop household ranking procedures, which take the household as a resource-sharing unit which acquires some sort of 'market' or 'life-style' position. In the end, such attempts have tended to become taxonomical exercises which lose sight of the reasons that we should be interested in class analysis in the first place -- to more clearly understand the processes and consequences of social inequality.

More fruitful are the feminist approaches which take on class analysis as more fundamentally flawed -- that is, they ask whether the concept of class itself, even if we find some way to adequately measure women's position within the class structure, can be our primary point of reference when seeking to understand the reproduction of social inequality. This has been the important feminist question, and it is on this question that the capitalism vs. patriarchy debates have hinged.

b. Capitalism or Patriarchy?

A number of feminist researchers have suggested that class analysis is not a sufficient basis for studying social inequality. Their argument is that class is only one of a number of dimensions of inequality, and that other dimensions of inequality (most importantly gender, but race, ethnicity,

sexual orientation and age are often mentioned as well) are equally important. Thus, "...a theory which is not able to cope with the articulation of the major sources of social inequality cannot adequately explain inequalities based on only one source, because all sources combine to define social position" (Abbott and Sapsford,1987;4). For feminists, gender inequality is not reducible to class inequality.

Delphy (1984)[11] and Walby (1986) have both engaged in extensive critiques of theories which attempt to subsume questions about gender under the more 'important' questions of class. While conventional class theory has looked at men's work in a capitalist mode of production, they recognize as equally (if not more) important, women's work in a patriarchal mode of production -- the home.

Delphy (1984:74) maintains that patriarchy is the "main enemy" of women. Patriarchy operates through the 'domestic mode of production' (as separate from the capitalist mode of production). As she analyzes it, patriarchal exploitation is the "common, specific and main oppression of women". It is common, "...because it affects all married women", specific "...becuase only women are under an obligation to perform free domestic services", and it is the main form of women's

[11]Delphy's argument was first elaborated in "The Main Enemy", which was published in French in 1970, and translated into English in 1974. All references are to the version reprinted in the 1984 collection of Delphy's work.

oppression "...because even when women go out to work, the class membership they derive from that work is conditioned by their exploitation as women". Thus, while she advocates a dual-systems theory of patriarchy and capitalism, her focus is on the former, with relatively little emphasis on the interrelationships of the two systems. Walby (1986) builds on Delphy's work, but stresses the antagonistic relationship between the capitalist mode of production (capitalism) and the domestic mode of production (patriarchy).

Walby (1986) finds Hartmann's (1981) conceptualization of the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy as "a healthy and strong partnership" problematic. Walby focusses instead on the tensions between capitalism and patriarchy, as they show "considerable antagonism and rivalry over the exploitation of women's labour" (Walby,1986;247). She defines patriarchy as "a system of interrelated social structures through which men exploit women" (51) and suggests that the key sets of patriarchal relations are to be found in domestic work, paid work, the state and male violence and sexuality. While the organization of domestic work is characterized as a "patriarchal mode of production" that is particularly significant in creating gender inequality, "...when patriarchy is in articulation with the capitalist rather than other modes of production, then patriarchal relations in paid work are of central importance to the maintenance of the system" (50). The

resulting picture is one of patriarchy and capitalism, as independent but articulated systems, in varying degrees of conflict over which one gets to exploit women's labour most thoroughly. The success of men in excluding women from the "better forms of work" in the labour market creates a situation where "housework is as good as anything else a woman is likely to get" (248). While Walby's analysis draws much needed attention to the extent to which patriarchal relations permeate the paid labour market, there are some serious problems with her framework. Biological reproduction and the deeply entrenched assumptions about the 'naturalness' of the relationship between child-bearing, child-rearing, and domestic work are barely mentioned -- domestic labour under capitalism is something women seem to fall into for lack of opportunity to do anything else. And, like most dual systems theories, a 'domestic mode of production' exists which stands outside of the 'capitalist mode of production'. Once again, the gendered division of labour is taken as coterminous with the public/private division.

Feminist theories of capitalism and patriarchy, while problematic, have greatly advanced our understanding of the arbitrary nature of the division between 'public' and 'private' labour. In summary, it becomes necessary to take, in the tradition of socialist theory, labour as a key category of analysis, but in a much broader sense than it is usually given

in the literature. Waged labour is only a portion of the total social labour performed in any society, and the wages (which determine whether labour is public/production or private/reproduction) attached (or not attached) to any particular form of labour are heavily laden with assumptions about what is just, fair and moral. Gender divisions are crucial to all aspects of the social division of labour, and shape both the material and ideological form that those divisions take. What emerges as significant is not so much the physical separation of the public and the domestic, but their ideological separation -- that is their separation as realms of thought and experience -- and the processes which legitimate[12] this separation. It is increasingly apparent that we cannot view 'the production of things' and the 'production of life' as distinct modes of production, but must see them as integral moments in any mode of production.[13] The public/private division set up as the expression of the gendered division of labour must necessarily fall.

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[12]'Legitimation' may be broadly understood as 'making sense of'. See Scott (1986) for a more detailed discussion of this perspective.

[13]For a convincing argument that this, in fact, is a direction suggested by Marx and Engels, see Sayer (1987), especially chapter 3.

2.5 Conclusion: Rethinking 'Public' and 'Private'

A division of labour by sex and a division between public and private spheres are not identical phenomena. Each has a history, and while one division may be manifested as a crucial form of the other, it is their relationship that is of interest. Thus, we need to examine the gendered division of labour and the public/domestic division as having intertwined, yet separate, trajectories. I would suggest that it is the reproduction of the conflation of these two phenomena that feminist theories of social reproduction must concern themselves with. That is, we cannot neglect the extent to which the sexual division of labour exists within and between each sphere, and the different way in which the gendered division of labour and the public-private dualism have developed historically. As Dorothy Smith (1985;2) reminds us, "It is only in capitalism that we find an economic process constituted independently of the daily and generational production of the lives of particular individuals and in which therefore we can think economy apart from gender." (emphasis in the original)". In locating the gendered division of labour as primarily one rooted in this public-private split, "we are reading back into history...a state of affairs peculiar to our own." (Ibid.) As Valverde and Weir (1988) suggest, "...it might be better to look at the ways in which a specific public-private distinction came to be gendered than to make

generalizations about women's confinement to privacy".

To summarize, a division of labour between men and women, and sexual inequality, as historical and anthropological work has shown, long predates capitalism and has influenced its development. As I will argue in the following chapter, the historical record shows that the nuclear household long predates industrialization and capitalism, and what emerged in conjunction with those developments was the kinship-based family as normative recruitment to households.[14] The historical evidence suggests that gender hierarchies entrenched in household economies were crucial to the birth of capitalism. As Connell (1987:104) puts it:

> Capitalism was partly constituted out of the opportunities for power and profit created by gender relations. It continues to be.[15]

We need to thus think in terms of a "gendered logic of accumulation" to reference the "...gender-structured system of production, consumption and distribution" which "...concentrates economic benefits in one direction, and economic losses in another" (Ibid:103-5).[16] If we conceive of

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[14]For details, see MacFarlane (1978), Nicholson (1986), Tilly and Scott (1978) and Rapp (1982). Nett (1981) provides a useful overview of the history of the Canadian family.

[15]I would add that a similar statement could be made with respect to the relationship between capitalism and ethnic and regional inequality.

[16]Acker (1988) suggests a similar sort of analysis in discussing 'gendered relations of distribution'.

the development of capitalism in such a way -- that is, recognizing not only that there is a logic of accumulation, but that it is from its beginnings a gendered logic -- we can move beyond the tenacious account of capitalism simply taking over the pre-existing patriarchal organization of domestic life to use for its own purposes (most commonly phrased in terms of its 'reproduction').

> "The point is not that industrialization and market forces had no effect on preindustrial values and practices; it is rather that the story is poorly understood as one where the causal arrow moves in only one direction....this methodological point becomes a political point in our own day...as practices of kinship and gender continue to affect market relationships <u>in the context of a political ideology which denies that possibility</u>" (Nicholson,1986:127 -- emphasis added)

This leads us to the need for a more detailed analysis of the historical separation of 'public' and 'private', and of kinship, state and economy, which will be the focus of Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

GENDER AND MODERNITY

3.1 Introduction

Any discussion of the 'division of labour' must be properly located within the classical project of sociological theory -- the attempts of the early theorists to come to terms with 'modernization'. The gendered division of labour must be not only located within this project, but in the larger, and unfinished, debates around 'modernity'. While 'modernization' may be broadly understood as the transition from 'simple', homogenous societies to 'complex', highly differentiated ones, with the attendent questions about social order and social change, the discourse of 'modernity' refers to the larger philosophical questions, dating back to the Enlightenment, surrounding 'rationalization' as the underpinning of both modernization and the interpretations of 'progress' in Western social and political thought.[1] Modern social and political

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[1]Rundell (1987:2) defines modernity as:

> ...a process of societal and cultural differentiation and pluralization propelled by and revolving around a series of developmental logics or dynamics which may be located within each of the differentiating spheres. These developmental

(continued...)

theory took root in the Enlightenment abandonment of traditional religious authorities for a belief in human reason and progress. The major works by classical sociological theorists such as Comte, Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Simmel were centrally concerned with the reconstruction of order out of the decline of traditional authority, and framed their questions within the discourse of 'modernization' -- the application of reason to the problem of integration given the change from simple to complex, traditional to modern, homogeneity to heterogeneity that they witnessed with the coming of a new industrial order. The growing social division of labour was a vital concern of classical theory, as was the shifting relationship between the individual and society. The dissolution of traditional communal bonds was perceived as a potential threat to interpersonal relations and social integration. As Waerness (1984:67) notes, current public debate concerning the quality of social relationships, loneliness and lack of fellowship sees these problems as something new, neglecting the degree to which these issues have constituted the central concerns of social theory for centuries. It is

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[1](...continued)
logics or dynamics include the general capitalization of social life; industrialization; the autonomization of art; and democratization of the debates and conflicts concerning the sovereignty of civil society and persons as autonomous beings.

the interpretation of modernity and its dilemmas that comprises the battleground for current political debate.

It has been common in both classical and contemporary accounts of modernity to view the family as 'prior' to the economy. This leads to a tendency to see the 'traditional' male and female roles in the family -- no matter how recent they are in the course of history, nor how outdated they are in the way most Canadians now live -- as meeting the necessary social division of labour in some sort of mutual accommodation, however dysfunctional that might be for certain people or groups of people. Deconstructing the emergence of family, economy and state as intimately related in their development, and inherently gendered, allows us to more adequately place gender into the analysis of modernity. I will argue that many contemporary accounts (socialist, feminist or otherwise) of the division of labour, and of the struggle between different economic and political interests that have shaped the current political and theoretical agenda, have crucially misunderstood the role of gender in organizing social life. In both classical and contemporary debates, the important axis of discussion has been the relationship between, largely framed in terms of the opposition between, 'public' and 'private' spheres of social life. In this chapter, I want to draw out the 'gender subtext' of these debates. To do so requires excavation of the public-private distinction through classical

liberalism and Marxism to more recent critical and feminist discussion of modernity. It is through this process that we can understand the relationship between public and private spheres as something distinct from the gendered division of labour, and locate it in the classical questions of the individual-society relationship.

3.2 Public and Private

The distinction between the 'public' and the 'private' is central to theories of modernity. In liberalism, and in classical social theory, the relationship between public and private is basic to the theorization of the individual-society relationship.[2] As classical theory developed, it inverted the asociality of the individual as constructed in liberalism, and it is within the general problematic of the individual-society relationship that the public-private distinction must be located.

a. Liberalism

For liberalism, the line is drawn between public and private to delineate the role of the state. Classical

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[2]This is necessarily a very brief discussion of these classical themes. Limitations of space preclude a more adequate exposition of important issues such as the underlying assumptions about human nature, and the purpose and process of the state and economy. Readers interested in these fundamental philosophical issues as they relate the themes to be developed in this chapter will find Benn and Gaus (1983), Elshtain (1981), Jaggar (1983), Pateman (1988), Rundell (1987), Seidman (1983) and Sydie (1987) to be useful sources.

liberalism was founded on the doctrine of individual[3] freedom -- "...whether defined as freedom from coercion, as moral self-determination, or as the right to individual happiness" (Seidman, 1983;15). Defense of these basic freedoms necessarily required clear limits on their restriction by the state. Individual freedoms are translated into individual 'rights', which the state is bound to administrate and uphold. The most fundamental right is the right to privacy and the public becomes necessary to secure the private -- chiefly private property and the privacy of interpersonal associations. The classic distinction between public and private, then, is that between the public world of politics, and the private world of economic and familial relationships. Locke's famous statement that "...every Man has a Property in his own Person" lays the basis for the idea that freedom equals the right to enter a contract regarding that property (Pateman, 1988:13).[4] 'Civil society' straddles the two realms

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[3]As I shall demonstrate later, the individual here was a male individual.

[4]While a key critique of the liberal conception of free and equal individuals is that it was only the propertied classes who had this freedom, the conceptualization of property as inclusive of the person himself allows for the labour contract, extending the right to enter property contracts to most men. Even Marx recognized men's possession of themselves and their capacities as central to his theory of the labour process and as moral justification for the abolition of wage labour. Women, however, have never been granted even the most basic rights to "property in their own persons", as centuries of struggle over the control of their

(continued...)

of public and private as the locus of the contract -- the state being the impartial (public) arbitrator of contracts between freely-acting (private) individuals. Liberal economic theory further presupposes "...a distinction between the public, 'economic' world of the market and the private 'non-economic' sphere of the home" (Jaggar, 1983;144). There is a sharp distinction within the liberal tradition, then, between political philosophy and economic theory, each oriented to a particular set of questions, but similarly deriving their conception of the social, and hence the public and the private, from the level of the individual. There is no question that the individual of liberalism was male -- women were excluded from the public in both its political and economic senses, and subsumed under the authority of their husbands/fathers.[4] They could not own property, sign contracts in their own right, nor was the bulk of their labour undertaken in terms of a labour contract. The marriage contract provided their only articulation as individuals to the public realm. Liberalism is thus not only premised upon the distinction between public and private, but separates out the domestic, and hence women, as particularly private.

The distinction between the state (public) and the family

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[4](...continued)
sexuality and their reproductive freedom bear witness to. See Pateman (1988) for an extended discussion of contract theory as it relates to sexual oppression.

(private) was made most clearly by Locke in Two Treatises of Government in terms of a distinction between political and paternal authority:

> ...the Power of a Magistrate over a Subject, may be distinguished from that of a Father over his Children, a Master over his Servant, a Husband over his Wife, and a Lord over his Slave....But these two Powers, Political and Paternal, are so perfectly distinct and separate; are built upon so different Foundations and given to so different Ends.... (cited in Nicholson,1986:152).

The privatization of the family, and the legitimation of patriarchal authority in the private sphere, derive from the ontological priority granted to the individual in liberal theory. It was the positioning of the individual as prior to, and partially outside of society, which permitted the exclusion of women from society.

b. Marxism

Marx developed his theory in sharp opposition to liberalism, seeing politics and economics as intimately related. For Marx, the public/private distinction in liberal political philosophy is largely illusory, and he rejects "...the conception of anything as private, as standing outside society or as prior to it, as unrelated to other people and of no concern to them, or as resting on the rights and claims of single persons..." (Kamenka,1983;274). The state is no impartial arbitrator, but an instrument of that class which controls the means of production. Politics becomes economic,

and economics political. But what of the familial?

For Marx, abandoning Hegel's conception of distinction between family, civil society and state, civil society "...is the true source and theatre of all history":

> Civil society embraces the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite stage of the development of productive forces. It embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage and, insofar, transcends the State and the nation...(Marx and Engels, 1970: 57).

Placing this conception of civil society into his broader theoretical framework, Marx offers the following account of the relationship between spheres:

> Assume a particular state of development in the productive forces of man and you will get a particular form of commerce and consumption. Assume particular stages of development in production, commerce and consumption and you will have a corresponding social constitution, a corresponding organization of the family, or orders or of classes, in a word, a corresponding civil society (Marx,1963:180)

Yet he is fairly clear that this is an historically emergent relationship, as "civil society as such only develops with the bourgeoisie" (Marx and Engels, 1970:57). Civil society has, "as its basis and premises", the family. It is in the family, and the "separation of society into families opposed to one another" that we find the roots of the division of labour, property relations, and the contradictory relationship between individual and society:

> The more deeply we go back into history, the more does the individual, and hence also the producing individual, appear as dependent, as belonging to a

> greater whole: in a still quite natural way in the family and in the family expanded into the clan....Only in the eighteenth century, in 'civil society', do the various forms of social connectedness confront the individual as a mere means towards his private purposes, as external necessity (Marx, 1973:84).

Civil society, then, is based in the contradiction of individual and society, and it is out of this contradiction that the state emerges: "...divorced from the real interests of individual and community, and at the same time as an illusory communal life, always based, however, on the real ties exisiting in every family and tribal conglomeration" (Marx and Engels, 1970: 53). It is the historical domination of relations of exchange over social relationships which "...has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation" (Marx and Engels,1948:11). Marx appears to retain here an idealized notion of family relationships -- one which has only been tainted by capitalist economic relationships.

Nicholson (1986) notes a contradiction within Marx's formulation. That is, Marx recognized the historical and contingent nature of the capitalist mode of production, but retreated into a philosophical anthropology of kinship. By analytically subordinating the family to civil society and economic imperatives, "Marx denies the specific logic of the family" (Mills,1987:81). As a result, classical Marxism cannot theorize the specificity of the domestic sphere, nor the sexual or psychodynamic politics within it.

Marxist theory does take a normative stance on the exclusion of women from public life, focusing on the private character of their labour. Women's oppression becomes associated with the emergence of private property. Private property, essential to the liberal conception of individual freedoms, illustrates for Marx a central contradiction of capitalism -- that is, the private control of socially produced goods. The experience of work is placed not in a network of atomistic individual relationships, but in a network of <u>social</u> relationships. In this way, the public/domestic division as it accompanied the emergence of private property, is central to Engels' (1972:137) location of women's oppression:

> Household management lost its public character. It no longer concerned society. It became a private service; the wife became the head servant excluded from all participation in social production.

As Dorothy Smith (1985:5) notes, Engels oversimplifies, but nonetheless draws our attention to an important distinction between the liberal and Marxist conceptions of women's labour within the public-private dualism:

> He did not see the division of labour simply as a distribution of work in work roles. Rather he saw the work process as articulated to social relations which defined its relation to others and hence defined how the doer of that work was related in society.

While Marx's formulation has been the most influential for feminist theory, it is worthwhile to briefly review Durkheim's solution to the individual-society paradox to more

adequately grasp the centrality of this problematic to both classical and contemporary social theory.

c. Durkheim

Durkheim's Division of Labour constituted a critical attack on the utilitarian individualism of classical liberal political economy. Where for the latter collective identity was derived from order imposed by the state on individuals in civil society, Durkheim differentiated between 'individuation' and 'individualism'. The paradox he set out to explain was thus: "What explains the fact that, while becoming more autonomous, the individual becomes more closely dependent on society?" The answer, of course, lay in his analysis of the division of labour. As the division of labour expands and mechanical solidarity declines, the individual no longer shares the same characteristics as all other individuals in society -- the individual is more and more a particular, differentiated personality. At the same time that the individual becomes particularized via the division of labour, there is increasing awareness of the common properties which each particular individual shares with the rest of humanity. It is thus the generalized individual which is united through 'moral individualism' -- the content of the 'conscience collective'. It is clear throughout Durkheim's writings that the 'generalized individual' who provided the basis for social solidarity was male. As Sydie (1987:46) suggests, for

Durkheim: '"Society" is, in fact, a code word for the interests and needs of men as opposed to those of women'. While the structure of domestic life was indeed social, and the nurturance of individual personality essential to the individualism that underpinned the division of labour, it was only the male who became individuated outside of the family, and thus it was males, and male activity, that constituted the public sphere of 'society'. Durkheim thus 'solves' the individual-society paradox of modernity at the expense of women's individuation, confining them to the private, or pre-social realm of the domestic sphere.

Key elements of Durkheim's formulation -- most notably the construction of the public sphere upon the generalized (male) individual, and the negation of women's individuality by their consignment to privacy -- have retained a tenacious hold in theories of social reproduction. As in Marxism, the domestic is treated as an element incorporated into 'modern' society in its transition from previous social formations, and thus retains a distinctly 'pre-social' tenor. Where Durkheim and Marx differ most sharply on the family is in the emphasis on its social vs. economic character in relation to the public sphere. It is the difference between a material and a moral interpretation of modernity.

3.3 Modernity and Rationality

a. Weber

A number of more recent theories of modernity have drawn extensively on Weber's writings on rationality as a means to understanding "the place of the individual in the modern world" (Whimster and Lash, 1987;1) Against the reification of the 'social' or the 'economic' as independent entities, Weber returns to the individual as actor. Significant here is the introduction of individual subjectivity as the conduit through which collective influences act.

Rationality, specifically instrumental rationality, is the "hallmark of modernity" (Benjamin,1988:184).[5] Like Marx, Weber's conception of history was largely built around the transition from traditional, personal forms of domination and authority to impersonal, economic forms. While Marx focussed on the tyranny of the market, the ascendence of legal-rational authority was, for Weber, the defining characteristic of modernity. As Sydie (1987:181) notes, women were 'dealt out' of the structure of authority and power from the beginning, through a thorough naturalization of the mother-child

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[5]A number of feminist theorists, including Benjamin (1988), have identified instrumental rationality as a specifically masculine rationality. This is a central point in feminist epistemologies, and thus extends critical theory's critique of positivism. The critique of positivism as ideological domination, expressed through instrumental rationality, is taken one step further by tying it to a specifically patriarchal form of ideological domination.

relationship and the rule of the father in the family. In Weber's account of capitalist development, the spread of bureaucracy and the state illustrated the growth of the 'iron cage' of a totally administered society, where impersonal relationships replace personal relationships, and human action is geared to activities of exchange and control. As Alexander (1987:197) suggests, Weber argued that:

> "...rationalization results not only in increased autonomy but in the spread of impersonal domination through every sphere of life. The increased capacity for this-worldly calculation sustains individuation, it is true. But it simultaneously facilitates subjection and domination. Weber invented the concept of rationalization to explain the seemingly irreconcilable qualities of the twentieth century.

The 'disenchantment of the world' culminates in the retreat of 'the ultimate and most sublime values' from public life "...either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations" (Weber, in Gerth and Mills, 1946;155). We are thus "...placed into various life-spheres, each of which is governed by different laws" (Ibid.;123). Yet as Joan Kelly (1984) has suggested, what a feminist analysis sees is not different spheres of social life, but different sets of social relations.

b. The Frankfurt School

Weber's pessimism regarding societal rationalization was picked up in the work of the early Frankfurt School. Horkheimer and Adorno turned their attention to "...the

specific logic of such spheres as the family, the state and culture in order to develop a more comprehensive analysis of the relation between the economic substructure, the superstructure, and the individual psyche" (Mills,1987:86-7). The central thrust of their work on the family was to demonstrate that "...the family not only depends on the historically concrete social reality, but is socially mediated down to its innermost structure" (Barrett and MacIntosh, 1982:35). As Horkheimer and Adorno portrayed it, the increasing commodification of labour, spurred by capitalist accumulation processes, resulted in women being drawn into production and a weakening of traditional patriarchal family structures. Against Marx, who saw the entry of women into the productive realm and the decline of the bourgeois family as progressive, even as he railed against the transformation of women and children into economic instruments, Adorno and Horkheimer concentrated on the consequences of reduced ego autonomy, and were forced to "mourn the passing of the authoritarian father" (Whitebrook, 1985:147).[6] In their hands, the 'decline of subjectivity' resulting from the erosion of the private sphere became central -- the notion that human beings had become so

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[6]See Donzelot (1981) and Lasch (1979) for similar themes. The basic argument rests on a relatively uncritical acceptance of the Oedipal model of ego development. See Benjamin (1988), especially chapters 4 and 5, for a detailed critique.

totally dominated that there was no possibility of emancipatory struggle.

c. Habermas

Habermas's 'break' with the earlier Frankfurt theorists was in part based on the abandonment of the Enlightenment that this position characterized. Rooting his critique of Marx and Weber, as well as of Horkheimer and Adorno, in their inability to clearly separate categorically different types of rationality, he develops an model of social evolution in which different types of rationality operate at different levels and through different actions. The most crucial distinction is between purposive (instrumental) rationality, geared to exchange and control, and based on a subject-object relationship and communicative rationality, geared towards understanding, and based on a subject-subject relationship.

The evolutionary model set up by Habermas is based on a progression of 'principles of organizations'. In 'primitive' social formations, it is the kinship system, with its matrix of age and sex roles, which determines "the totality of social intercourse" (Habermas, 1979:18). In 'traditional' social formations, class domination in its political form becomes the principle of organization:

> With the rise of a bureaucratic apparatus of authority, a control center is differentiated out of the kinship system. This allows the transference of the production and distribution of social wealth

> from familial forms of organization to owenership of the means of production. The kinship system is no longer the institutional nucleus of the whole system: it surrenders the central functions of power and control to the state (Ibid.:18-9).

In this stage, system integration and social integration become differentiated, and there is an inherent tension between them which requires new modes of legitimation. In the modern liberal-capitalist social formation, "unpolitical" class rule, based on relationship of wage-labour and capital, is the principle of organization. The political and the economic become 'uncoupled', enabling the economic system to contribute to both system and social integration.

> The transfer of socially integrative functions to a subsystem that primarily fulfills system integrative functions is possible only because in liberal capitalism the class relationship is institutionalized through the labour market and is thereby depoliticized (Ibid.:25).

Central to the tension between system and social integration in Habermas's theory of modernity is the distinction between 'system' and 'lifeworld', with, in late capitalism, the capitalist economy and modern administrative state as paradigmatic of the former, and the family as paradigmatic of the latter. In recent work (1979;1984), he describes a three-fold typology of rationalization -- societal (economy and state), cultural (art, law and morality), and personality. In this schema, economic and state systems are not simply detached from the lifeworld, but imbedded in it.

There is thus no simple division between 'public' and 'private'.

As Fraser (1987a) suggests, there are a number of advantages to this approach, in correcting the dualistic approach to the separation of 'public' and 'private'. To summarize, it treats the modern, restricted nuclear family as historically emergent, with its own determinate factors, it specifies that this type of family emerges in relation to the emerging capitalist economy and administrative state, and it charts the dynamics of exchange between them. That is, there are two distinct but interrelated separations -- one at the level of system, and one at the level of lifeworld. This is a distinct improvement over the classical constructions of the public-private division as running between the family and the economy and polity. Yet Habermas' model suffers from the same lack of attention to kinship and gender relations as organizing principles in the modern age. This leads to serious problems in Habermas' relevance to feminist theory. Most significantly, as Fraser points out, he has failed to theorize the 'gender subtext' by neglecting to see gender identity as a medium of exchange between spheres. Gender becomes invisible in the complexities of material and symbolic reproduction, confined again to particularity and privacy. If the gender sub-text is elaborated:

> (I)t then becomes clear that feminine and masculine gender identity run like pink and blue threads

> through the areas of paid work, state administration and citizenship as well as through the domain of familial and sexual relations. *This is to say that gender identity is lived out in all arenas of life.* It is one (if not the) "medium of exchange" among all of them, a basic element of the social glue that binds them to one another (Fraser,1987a:45, my emphasis)

This is the most crucial failure of theories of modernity, be they classical or contemporary accounts. Gender is located in the realm of kinship and family, a sphere of social life which has great import in the structuring of 'pre-modern' social formations, but loses this importance as an organizing principle as 'modern' society develops. Once industrialized, capitalized class society is introduced into history, "...the problems of gender and of the status of women seem to disappear" (Flax,1982;234).

3.4 Kinship, Gender and Modernity

In theories of modernity, kinship takes on a rather contradictory status. The concepts of 'household', 'kinship' and 'family', often used interchangeably, are employed to describe important facets of social organization. While seen as varying in importance as organizing principles at various historical junctures, they are at the same time seen as increasingly outside society in the modernization process. Accorded, as an institution, important status as a moral regulator, socializer, reproducer or 'haven' in a disenchanted world, the family was never sufficiently deconstructed. It is

not enough to examine the relationship between 'kinship' or 'the family' as an institution in relationship with other institutions. We must deconstruct this paradigmatic example of the private sphere into its gendered components, for it is only in this context that the separation of public and private, or politics, economy and family, makes sense as crucial to the project of modernity.[7] As Anderson (1986:124) suggests in her study of pre-capitalist social organization among the Huron, we need to understand the ways in which "...the gender specific division of labour first separates men from women and the ways in which the kinship structure reunites them into economic, political and familial units". With the emergence of capitalism, a more detailed analysis of the appearance of kinship as expressed through the 'household' is required. As Rapp (1982:179) stresses, households and families must be distinguished, to see "...households as material relations and the family as normative recruitment to those relations". The economic, political and ideological moments of 'kinship' must

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[7]In a recent paper, Sayer (1988) elaborates on the important distinction between critique and historical reconstruction in Marx's method. Critique, or passage from the concrete (the world as experienced) to the abstract (the concepts which allow description) yields 'simple abstractions'. A complete analysis also requires passage back from the abstract to concrete through historical investigation --"...it is only through the particular and concrete that the general and abstract has any real existence" (p.5). 'The family', as opposed to the economy or the polity, remains an abstraction until we undertake investigation of how these relationships were/are lived by gendered individuals.

be historically examined, to reclaim the 'family' and women's assignment therein from the realm of the natural.

Two tasks seem particularly important here: first, to map out the complex, bi-directional relationships between the domestic and economic spheres in terms of their gender-specific expressions, and second, to indicate the variability of those relationships in specific historical circumstances. Too often, broad statements are made about the effects of capitalist development on the family, neglecting the uneveness that development in different national contexts and suggesting that economic change and changes in domestic arrangements occurs in lock-step fashion. As Marjorie Cohen (1988:22) concludes, the assumption that "...capitalist industrialization affects women's labour in broadly similar ways wherever it occurs...is not valid". In particular, caution must be exercised when seeking to understand the historicity of the gendered division of labour and the public/private division in Canada, given that the orthodox account of the effects of industrialization on women's labour and the domestic sphere has been based on the British experience. Within Canada, considerable variations in domestic and economic arrangements may be found between regions according to the specific mode of production, demographic factors, migration patterns and a host of other sociocultural considerations.

Work by social historians in Britain (Harris,1983;

Laslett and Wall,1972; McFarlane,1978) has challenged the popular inference that it was industrialization which broke down the extended family into smaller 'nuclear' units. Evidence now suggests that industrialization had little effect on household size, and that the nuclear household as the dominant form of organizing domestic life emerged long prior to, and hence may have had considerable influence upon, the growth of industrialized capitalism.

A similar pattern is noted in Canada. Nett (1981), in a useful review of Canadian research, debunks a number of myths about the family. While there was some variation between English and French Canada, with the latter showing higher incidences of extended kin networks, "it can be said with a fair degree of certainty that the type of household in which most Canadians resided, from the time of settlement in Acadia, New France, New England and later Upper Canada, was the nuclear, or 'simple' family" (242). While household structures varied according to stage in the life-cycle and economic circumstances, "...the two generation family household was the norm for most colonists and pioneers" (Ibid.). Research by Bradbury (1984), Gaffield (1984), and Katz (1975), among others, suggests that among the unskilled urban working class, young couples frequently shared households not with kin, but with unrelated families or couples out of economic necessity. Households also often contained non-family members such as

servants and lodgers. Whether households contained members unrelated by kinship or not, they tended to be organized as discrete nuclear 'units'.

Until the late 1880's, the economic activity of most Canadians was in agriculture or exportable resources (fur, timber, fishing). The labour of women and children was crucial to family survival. With industrialization and the growth in wage labour, the needs of the family economy still dictated the terms under which wage labour would be undertaken -- for example, children would only go 'out' to work if their labour could be spared (Conrad, 1986) by the household.

Establishing the pre-industrial existence of a household economy, organized around the nuclear family and differentiated by gender, age and kinship status is important in its implications for the development of capitalism. As Cohen (1988) has demonstrated in her study of nineteenth-century Ontario, women's labour in subsistence was critical for capital accumulation:

> In the areas characterized by capitalistic productive relations, the existence of family subsistence production prevented wages from rising too rapidly. In the family economy women's subsistence production reduced the need to provide for the family with income from market activities and thus permitted capital to accumulate at a higher rate (154).

Women's labour in early Canada was, of course, not limited to subsistence production. Indian women played a crucial role in

the fur trade, not only by their labour which provided traders with the food and clothing essential to their expeditions, but through cementing, via marriage, the commercial and social ties between white traders and native communities that were essential to the fur trade (Brown,1980; Van Kirk,1986). Prairie women "...performed whatever work was needed" -- be it as independent farmers, farm 'wives', wage workers, entrepreneurs or midwives (Sundberg, 1986). So essential was their labour to the settling of the prairies, that unmarried women were actively recruited to the west, through 'emigration societies'. In the Maritimes, women's labour was central to family fishing concerns -- Ephraim Tucker, an American observer in Labrador in 1838 gave the following account:

> When the salmon and trout fishing commences, the women and children employ themselves assiduously in the sport, and are often out night and day while the season of this fishery lasts. At the fish stands, while the cod fishery is in the full tide of operation, the women are seen among the most constant and dexterous in dressing the fish, thrown up by the fishermen. Some of these females will dress two or three thousand fish in a single day (cited in Prentice et.al.,1988:78).

Even after the advent of the 'fish plant' which supplanted the family production unit, women's labour remains vital to 'shore work' in the fishing industry (Connelly and MacDonald,1986; Porter,1985). In the rapidly industrializing urban areas, women undertook a variety of waged labour outside the home. While domestic service remained the major form of women's employment,

throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century women increasingly took on paid jobs in manufacturing, clerical work, teaching and nursing. By the early part of the twentieth century, employers had come to anticipate and depend on the availability of cheap female labour (Strong-Boag,1988:43). Within their homes, women took in boarders, sewed, did laundry and produced a range of commodities (woven goods, wool, butter, cheese, eggs) for market distribution, both in urban and rural settings (Bradbury,1984; Cohen,1988; Prentice et. al.,1988). To discuss women's economic role in the development of the Canadian economy as solely geared to 'subsistence' or to portray them as family 'helpmates' to commodity-producing husbands is to distort both the range and the crucial importance of their labour to economic development.

The labour of women in the context of a family economy, whatever form it may have taken, was crucial to the development of capitalism. Yet equally important to remember is that the 'family' owned neither the 'means of production' of the family economy, nor the fruits of its labour -- the male head of the household did. Thus, "...the question of power through property relations in general is not unique to capitalist relations, but is crucial to understanding productive relations within the family economy as well" (Cohen,1988:44).

It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the

Canadian state undertook to grant the most basic of property rights to women (Ursel,1986). In 1855, custody legislation was passed in Upper Canada which permitted women to petition for custody of their children. In 1859, women were granted rights to property that they had owned before marriage. The Married Women's Property Act of 1872 extended women's property rights to include control over their wages, but did not change the fact that married women still required their husband's consent to engage in waged labour. During the latter half of the nineteeth century, the period in which women's property rights were gradually extended, increasing control was being exercised over women's and children's labour. The 'ascendency of childhood' resulted in vast social reform -- restrictive child labour laws, compulsory education, the growth of child welfare agencies -- which had clear implications for women. Mandell (1988:51) links this late nineteenth century 'cult of childhood' -- the increasing valuation of children as emotional, not economic assets, and the emergence of the professionalization of child-rearing practices -- to the cementing of the 'cult of domesticity' for women.

Thus, while the nuclear family household is clearly not a capitalist invention, we can more precisely locate the emergence of the modern nuclear family, as it is ideologically constructed around the mother-child nexus, as a mid-nineteeth century development. It is in these terms that we can

understand the distinction between the nuclear household and the nuclear family: while the former appears to have been instrumental as a family economy (often incorporating non-family members) in providing the conditions for capitalist accumulation, the latter is more historically emergent as laying the basis for the normative recruitment and structuring of family households in industrialized settings. Viewed in this way, it becomes clear that many accounts of 'modernization' and the family have rested upon rather abstract characterizations of family change, and have periodized history solely from a male perspective. As Katz (1982) suggests, it is a misconception to assume that the bourgeoisie was the first class to manifest the traits of the 'modern' family premised upon some notion of the separation of home and work. Clearly it was the urban working class for whom home and work first became separate. The relationship between industrialization and family change was mediated by class. The 'modern' bourgeois family, if we can speak of such a thing, emerged not with some abstract separation of household and workplace, but with the entrenchment of motherhood as a vocation. The physical tasks of motherhood declined greatly as women spent a smaller proportion of their lifespans pregnant and nursing, but the psychological tasks increased (Rapp,1979;182). Children had spirits which needed to be properly nurtured, not broken, and it was the mother who was charged with this task:

> By providing the correct environment for child development, mothers undertook the moral regulation of children. The house became an enclosed space, set apart from the outside world, in which this synthetic and controlled environment was created (Mandell,1988;70).

A growing social reform movement reinforced women's domestic 'calling' as indispensible to the future of the nation -- as Figure 3.1 illustrates, it was the special qualities of women as mothers that formed a major plank for the suffrage movement.

Domestic science became the preferred educational option for girls, preparing them to undertake their future role as guardians of the home. Maternal feminists valorized the mother-child relationship, and undertook to 'educate' working class mothers, whose economic activities and ignorance of 'scientific' child rearing techniques were linked to a host of social ills -- infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, and street gangs, to name a few (Mandell, 1988:70).

The solidification of kinship and domesticity in the 'privatized' nuclear family had consequences for men as well. As traditional patriarchal authority gradually waned with the emergence of 'affective individualism' in the family (Stone, 1977) and increased state-imposed limits on men's control of women and children, masculinity and male authority became increasingly defined through the language of 'economic individualism'. As women became constructed in a moral

relationship to children and family as the guardians of the family unit, men became defined in an economic relationship as the provider for that unit.

FIGURE 3.1

"VOTES FOR OUR MOTHERS"

GIVE MOTHER THE VOTE
WE NEED IT
VOTES FOR OUR MOTHERS
OUR FOOD OUR HEALTH OUR PLAY
OUR HOMES OUR SCHOOLS OUR WORK
ARE RULED BY MEN'S VOTES
Isn't it a funny thing
That Father cannot see
Why Mother ought to have a vote
On how these things should be?
THINK IT OVER

poster, 1915

SOURCE: Franzen and Ethiel (1988) (no copyright)

The growing administrative state actively regulated these gender-specific 'identities'. The regulation of women's labour and principles for wage-setting both assumed and reinforced the legitimacy of women as mothers who were supported by men as workers.

Corrigan and Sayer (1985:140-1) note the 1833 Factory Act in England which enshrined age and gender categories into labour regulation:

> The labour force is hence forth split between: children; young persons and women; and adult men. The first category have to be protected...; the second category have to be regulated; only the third group are capable of making 'free' contracts.

A similar categorization of labour is found in Canadian history. Women have always been, and continue to be, constructed as a special category of labour. A number of researchers have noted that early labour legislation in Canada "...had more to do with women as reproducers than with women as wage workers" (Ursel,1986;168). Protective legislation regulated the supply and conditions of female and child labour according to what was proper as interpreted by men. Thus, when the Royal Commission on Bell Canada in 1907 found female workers to be horrendously exploited, reform was justified not in terms of regulating capital , but by reference to the state's interest in "regulating the health of young women"

(Valverde and Weir, 1988:32).[8] Male labour market segments became defined in terms of skill requirements, women's in terms of their 'suitability' to feminine temperament.

Studies of wage and cost of living figures clearly indicate that it was nearly impossible for a female industrial worker to earn a living wage -- the average wage of female factory workers in Canada in 1913 was $5 a week, while the living wage at that time was considered to be $7.50 a week (Ursel,1986;170). Lowe (1987: 159-62) comes to similar conclusions regarding the ability of female clerical workers to support themselves adequately on their wages. The first minimum wage to be implemented in British Columbia in 1918 was largely the result of fears that women would turn to prostitution and crime because they could not live on such low wages.

The whole idea of the 'wage' and its distribution, particularly as it has appeared in discussions of the 'family wage' and the 'family project', deserves closer examination. For much socialist-feminist theory, the idea of the 'family wage' represents a key point of convergence between capitalism and patriarchy. As Sokoloff (1980;168) summarizes it:

> It was only with the development of the family wage that it was possible for men to be paid a wage that

[8]See Sangster (1986) for a detailed analysis of the Bell Telephone strike and the implications of the inquiry for the social construction of the opposition between women's paid labour and their maternal and domestic role.

> was supposed to be sufficient to reproduce their labour power through the consumption/reproduction work of their wives....It was through the family wage that conflicts between patriarchy and capitalism were resolved and thereby can be said to have cemented the identity of women and nature and her "natural" role in the family.

Analysis of the 'wage' is placed within the conception of a 'family project' as a kinship based household which pools resources to maximize its survival. These resources include both waged and unwaged labour. Thus, the family/household becomes the intersection of the public and private worlds. Yet a number of key points remain unanalyzed in this formulation.

First of all, wages, and the 'family wage' in particular, are overlaid with moral and ideological conceptions about both class and gender. As Kessler-Harris (1988;239) notes, the notion of a 'just price' for labour has always rested on subjective judgements about the morality of social hierarchies:

> It corresponded to a reasonable charge that would enable the producer to support his family on a scale suitable to his station in life (de Roover, cited in Kessler-Harris, 1988;239).

In Canada in 1918, the government endorsed a number of principles for the establishment of wages and other aspects of the employer-employee relationship, the ninth of which stated:

> That all workers, including common labourers, shall be entitled to a wage ample to enable them with thrift to maintain themselves and their families in decency and comfort... (cited in Lewis, 1988:22).

That the worker in the above principle was a male worker was taken for granted -- principle eleven stated that only women

doing work ordinarily performed by men were entitled to equal pay (Ibid.).[9] Thus, proper social distinctions between classes (with certain 'stations in life' obviously needing to exercise more 'thrift') and genders, have always permeated the very notion of what constituted a just wage.

Secondly, the family wage is primarily an ideological construction which has never been realized for most of the working class. Women (and children) have long engaged in economic activity to supplement family income in the absence of a family wage. While it is commonly assumed that the growth of wage labour supplanted the family economy, evidence from both historical and current research suggests that the transition has never been complete.[10] Katz (1982;310) emphasizes the fallaciousness of stressing the separation of family and economy in the process of industrialization, suggesting that "...families always have an economy whether or not all members are engaged in the production of food, commodities or wages". What is apparent is that the economic contributions of women have never been fully reckoned into the social accounting of

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[9]There is a striking similarity here to current debates over pay equity.

[10]See for example, Pahl (1984) and Redclift and Mingione (1985) on the growing significance of household economies against the background of economic restructuring. Relevant Canadian case studies include Connelly and MacDonald (1986) and Mackenzie (1986). Meissner's (1981) work is also suggestive here.

productive labour. As Strong-Boag (1988:41) summarizes it:

> Women's responsibility for housework and child care, coupled with the reality of female wage rates, which were regularly only forty to sixty percent of those paid for comparable male labour, meant that women who wanted to add to the family income were most likely to take on tasks, such as sewing, baby-minding, and taking in boarders, that could be performed at home and that did not require hiring domestic substitutes. Rarely, if ever, were such money-making activities acknowledged in the census. Only the very poor re-entered wage labour as mature women.

Thirdly, the 'family project' needs to be deconstructed into its gendered components. As a number of writers have pointed out, taking the family unit as the basis of households detracts attention from social relations within the household, based on gender, age, and kinship statuses, and how these articulate to the realm of paid employment. Just as in the labour market, the division of labour and the rewards received in families depends more upon the status of the family member than on the nature of the work done or on any measure of ability or need.[11] Families, or households, have never been unproblematic 'units' -- they represent a complex of relationships of status, responsibility, power and sexuality based on age, gender and kinship status. It is a mistake to see the family/household as structuring productive relationships only in pre-industrial, pre-capitalist social

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[11]This point, with respect to the family division of labour, is made convincingly by Delphy and Leonard (1986).

formations. Current labour market participation rates for men and women show that marital status, the stage of family life cycle, age and number of children are related to different expectations about participation in waged labour for both sexes. Not surprisingly, we see male labour force participation increase at the same point in the life span that women's decreases. The highest participation rate is for married men with preschool children, the same family situation which results in a low participation rate for women (Boulet and Lavallee, 1984:8; see also Table 2.1).

In addition to the institutionalization of unequal pay and restricted access to many forms of work for women, the state "...further structured social policy in such a way as to economically and socially coerce women into marriage, through welfare-state policies structured on the assumption of masculine labour and authority within the family and social punishment for the transgression of sexual norms deriving from this arrangement" (Burstyn,1985:61). Resistance to women's suffrage stressed the sanctity of the maternal, economically dependent woman, a position reflected in popular ideology. In the U.S., cartoons proliferated which depicted women's suffrage as inevitably followed by their wearing suits and smoking cigars while neglected children cried as their harried and de-masculinized fathers attempted to tend to them (Franzen and Ethiel, 1988).

As Valverde and Weir (1988:31-2) suggest, the regulatory project of the emerging state included the formation of 'moral subjects' to provide the basis for 'nation building', and gender organization and sexual regulation through the construction of legal, social and economic boundaries between public and private was integral to this process:

> The privacies of sexuality, the family, domestic labour and capital are regulated throught different bodies of law and interact with one another as well as with 'the public'. The public/private distinction operates as a complex regulatory strategy organizing multiple 'realms' which in practice do not remain separate (my emphasis).

No natural divisions can be drawn between family, economy and state in the development of gendered spheres in the course of Canadian history. The pre-industrial family economy provided antecedent hierarchies of gender and age, and these both shaped and were shaped by the emerging wage economy and administrative state. As Cohen (1988:158) summarizes it: "Not only did new forms of production grow out of old ones, but the very way in which productive relationships changed over time were integrally bound to gendered responses to change".

What directions does this brief review of economic and family change in Canada suggest for the theorization of gender in the process of modernity? As Nicholson (1986) suggests, it was the unification of kinship with domesticity, associated with the emergence of the modern family, that became expressed as the distinction between the 'public' and the 'private'.

This leads to the following thesis: that some of the basic categories we have traditionally employed to explain social life --family, state, economy -- reflect historical, and not natural, social divisions. The separation of the family from the state, and the separation of the family from the economy, were (are) historical processes. Thus:

> ...an analysis which focuses on the historical separation of the economic from the familial enables us to see both the economic nature of gender relations within the family and the gendered aspect of economic relations outside it as a consequence of the emergence of the economy out of kinship (Nicholson,1986: 126).

This forces a reconsideration of the accepted theorizations of domestic, or 'personal' life. Failure to comprehend the crucial role of gender in structuring both public and private life, and the multi-faceted divisions between spheres, has resulted in a reification of the economic individualism of the market. Assuming that kinship and gender were important principles of social organization only in pre-industrial, pre-capitalist formations allows only a partial understanding of the complex relationship between kinship, economy and state, and renders a truly sociological analysis of the gendered division of labour, expressed through closely regulated gendered identities, impossible.

3.5 The Failure of the Classical Project

From the origins of classical sociological theory, the social differentiation of modern society has provided the

underpinning of the discipline. Thus, "(I)n principle, sociology should be able to incorporate domestic and personal life as a particular and specialized branch of the division of labour in a modern, complex society" (Yeatman,1986;160). If humans are defined as social beings, derived from aspects of their social existence, then there is a "fluidity to the distribution of actors between the branches of the social division of labour" (Ibid:161). Given this fluidity, we understand the possibility for individuals to possess a 'role set' -- to occupy different roles in different spaces/times/ contexts, creating the possibility of an internally differentiated and complex individual personality.[12] Yet the classical phase of sociology did not realize the promise in this for the theorization of personal life. Seeking to derive the individual solely from the social, it dissolved the classical liberal distinction of public and private:

> The classical sociological project is caught by the inversion it has effected of the classical liberal starting point. In deprivatising the individual, it abolishes the field of social interaction that makes an individual a particular or unique individual. This makes it virtually impossible for classical sociology to recognise theoretically the

[12]Marx, of course, recognized the possibility of this in his famous discussion of alienation in the German Ideology, when he suggests that in communist society one could "...hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening and criticize after dinner...without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic" (Marx and Engels, 1970:53). As a number of more contemporary commenters have noted, he is silent on who cooks and cleans up after the dinner while he is criticizing.

> sociological distinctiveness of the domestic domain ... since it is in this domain that unique individuality is socially constituted and recognised (Yeatman,1986;164).

Thus, domesticity, and hence women, are consigned to the 'natural', the 'pre-social', the 'primary group' or the 'embryo of community'.[13] From Durkheim through to Chodorow, the implications are that two specialized types of personalities are created -- the masculine and the feminine -- each with a particular set of social skills and orientations. By conflating the gender division of labour with the public/domestic division, we preclude the possibility that "the differentiation and mutual depen-dence of public and domestic aspects of society" could be expressed "within the same personality, and not as two distinct types of personality" (Yeatman, 1986: 171).

It is precisely this illusion -- that the domestic, personal aspects of life must take the form of the feminine personality which is separate from and opposed to the masculine personality -- on which the popular debates over the protection of personal life hinge. Calls for the defense of the 'private sphere' as they have emerged on both ends of the political spectrum, including some feminists, have peppered the literature in recent years (see for example, Berger and

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[13]See also Sydie's (1987) discussion of 'natural woman' and 'cultured man'.

Berger,1983; Donzelot,1980; Elshtain,1982; Lasch,1979). Benjamin (1988) terms them "gender conservatives", who take up "defending the traditional female ethos of nurturance while affirming its exlusion from the public social world" (201). The blurring of boundaries between traditionally feminine and masculine personalities and orientations is associated with the demise of the private sphere:

> The feminist proposal that fathers nurturing children would simultaneously repair the repudiation of the mother and reconcile men to nurturance is transformed into a nightmare vision of raising children like Perdue chickens (Benjamin,1988:204)

From a feminist perspective, the failure of theories of modernity has been to adequately come to grips with sexual difference. The problem of order in the transition from traditional to modern societies was effectively solved in liberalism by the contract, and in sociology, by subverting the individual to the social. In taking the social as primary, the particular aspects of individuality were of waning interest, being consigned to questions of individual psychology, or 'nature'. The public/private dualism thus becomes expressed as the dualisms of universal/particular, rationality/emotionality, instrumental/expressive, formal/informal, political/apolitical, economic/familial -- expressed by way of the division of labour which is expressed via the distinct personality types of masculine/feminine. What concerns us is then, is "...the production and reproduction of social

identities" (Corrigan, 1981b:256), specifically gendered identities, as they have come to be represented by this parade of dualisms. It is the production and reproduction of gendered identities that will be explored in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

GENDERED IDENTITIES

4.1 Introduction

It is worth recapping here some of the arguments that have been developed in the preceding chapters. In chapter 1, the duality of agency and structure emerged as a key problem in theories of social reproduction. In chapter 2, it was noted that the gendered division of labour is not sufficient for explaining consciousness or the generation of personal identities. In chapter 3, I connected this to the failure of the 'classical project' to theorize the individual-society relationship without denying women's individuality. The gendered division of labour becomes expressed by closely regulated gendered identities, yet the supposed universality of the 'subject' masks the particularity of subjects. The dualities of agency/ structure, individual/society, and universal/particular are woven through theories of social reproduction, and form the central axes of debate -- most importantly between structuralist and culturalist interpretations of social reproduction and between theories of social reproduction in general and those in the post-

structuralist, post-modern camp which deny that there is anything to be reproduced.

The subject-structure relationship is at the heart of the more philosophical questions of humanism versus anti-humanism, and as Soper (1986;12) notes, the interpretation of Marx lies at the heart of this controversy, but by no means exhausts it. Feminist theory is one of the more recent entrants into these debates, with the central question being how to theorize the subject of feminist theory. Alcoff (1988) has aptly termed this the 'identity crisis' in feminist theory. If, as I have suggested, we need to be concerned with the production and reproduction of gendered identities, then we need to reconceptualize what we mean by 'identity'. In addition, if we are interested in theorizing trans-formative possibilities, then we need to theorize subjectivity as the location of agency.

The intent of this chapter is to sort out some of the debates around 'the subject' -- specifically the subject of feminist theory, but in more general terms, the subject of social theory. The word 'subject', of course, has a dual meaning -- as the signifier of the individual who has a subjectivity, and as the signifier of one who is under the authority of another. While post-modernist theories stress the

coincidence of these meanings,[1] theories of social and cultural reproduction, including most socialist-feminist theories, emphasize the subject as the location of (potentially resistive) agency. The notion of 'gendered subjectivity', in both these senses, has garnered considerable interest in feminist theory, and is central to an understanding of the way in which gender becomes imbedded in both subject and structure, and their relationship. Whether through psychoanalytic exploration of the roots of gender identity, or through the continuous process of gender socialization which reproduces 'femininity' and 'masculinity', the overriding question has been why "...women seem to 'internalize' the oppressive 'external' reality" (Jagger, 1983:149), and thus collude in its reproduction. As Jaggar (Ibid:150-1) suggests, socialist feminist theory needs to develop an alternative to the traditional Marxist notion of 'false consciousness', the concept of 'sex-role conditioning' implied in liberal feminist thought, and the pessimism of psychoanalytic approaches. Social reproduction involves a legitimizing process; yet rather than seeing the dominant ideology as being uncritically 'transmitted' to reproduce the conditions for class and gender inequalities, it is more fruitful to examine the negotiation of

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[1]As Foucault (1980;97) puts it, "we should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects".

social ideology in the context of lived experience. This differs from the phenomenological and ethnomethodological approaches which stress the negotiation of intersubjective situations (without reference to structures of power), yet borrows from this tradition in seeing gender identity as something which is 'accomplished' through practice. That is, it recognizes agency on the part of the subject. Drawing on some recent work in feminist philosophy, history and psychoanalysis, I will outline what I see as a fruitful direction for theorizing the gendered subject -- as interpreted identities.

4.2 Beyond the Production Paradigm

Any theory of social reproduction must include explanation at the level of the subject -- thus accepting the Weberian insight that 'structures', no matter how compelling, only 'act' through individual subjectivities. I want to begin with, as Dorothy Smith (1987:99) suggests a feminist sociology must, the problematic formulated by Marx and Engels in the German Ideology:

> Individuals always started, and always start, from themselves. Their relations are the relations of their real life. How does it happen that their relations assume an independent existence over against them? And that the forces of their own life overpower them?

Related to this is another central problematic, also clearly situated by Marx, in the Economic and Philosophical

Manuscripts:[2]

> Though each person is a unique individual -- and it is just that particularity which makes each an individual, a really individual communal being -- each is equally the whole, the ideal whole, the subjective existence of society as thought and experienced. Each exists in reality as the representation and the real mind of social existence, and as the sum of human manifestations of life (in Bottomore, 1963: 158)

In these two passages, Marx sets out the subject-structure relationship as simultaneously individual and social. In some ways, he anticipates the later work of symbolic interactionism (such as that of Mead), which stressed the self as constituted through the internalization of the social, but unlike the latter, domination is central to Marx. The elements of a critical social psychology and a theory of the subject are set out, but there is a key theoretical space in reconciling the actor, as the bearer of socially imposed identities, as both an individual and a collective subject. While Marx admirably situates the terrain, he fails to explore it fully.

Of the challenges levelled against marxism, both from feminist and non-feminist critiques, perhaps the most serious is that regarding the theorization of the 'subject'. Specifically, there is increasing doubt cast on the premise of orthodox marxist theory that an individual's identity, consciousness, and in essence, social being, are derived from

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[2]I have rendered the pronouns in this passage gender-neutral.

one's position in the social division of labour. 'Subjects' are positioned as bourgeois or proletariat, owner or worker -- as members of a class. The concept of class thus problematizes the relationship between individuals, as they appear as workers and owners, and between the individual and society. That relationship has been recast by feminists, deploying the concept of gender to problematize both the relationship between men and women, and between women and society. This insistence, that subjects are not only classed, but also gendered, has taken socialist feminist theory into a multitude of directions seeking to unravel the knots of just how gender constitutes the subject. Yet most of this work has remained within the parameters of the 'paradigm of production'.

I believe that a focus on 'production', even if broadly taken to include both the 'production of things' and the 'production of life', is inadequate for the development of a socialist-feminist ontology. One of the obvious problems with approaches that seek to insert biological reproduction and reproductive labour into a production model, is that gender comes to be understood solely in reproductive terms. One might be forgiven, when reading most of these accounts, for thinking that human reproduction has little to do with feelings such as intimacy, pleasure, guilt, passion, or for that matter,

anything to do with sexuality at all.[3] To begin to adequately theorize the subject, we need to return to Marx's starting point of 'sensuous human activity' as the basis of subjectivity, and then radically reconstruct his project to remove the limits placed on it by the production paradigm. This entails moving towards a paradigm of intersubjectivity, built on the relationship of subject to subject, not subject to object.

Perhaps the most radical recasting of historical materialism has been Habermas's displacement of production as the basic human activity for an emphasis on communicative action. "The production paradigm so restricts the concept of practice that the question arises of how the paradigmatic activity-type of labour or the making of products is related to all the other cultural forms of expression of subjects capable of speech and action" (Habermas, 1987:79). Recent feminist philosophy has offered a particularly pointed challenge to the

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[3] Elshtain makes a somewhat similar critique of economistic Marxist-feminist theories of reproduction:"...they see the family only as a unit defined by its role in the provision of domestic labour and the reproduction cycle of labour-power through which it relates to the functional prerequisites of capitalism. What of family loyalty? Intimacy? Responsibility? Cross-generational ties? Love? Hate?" (1981:138) However, I disagree sharply with Elshtain's conclusions on the direction that feminist theory should take to correct this narrow view of reproduction. Her position is, in my opinion, an overly valorized conception of motherhood which replicates the dualism of feminine/nurturance vs. male/autonomy, and calls for women to embrace the private world of mothering.

production paradigm, asking whether "...the concept of production, which is based on the model of an active subject transforming, making and shaping an object given to it" can adequately comprehend traditionally female activities, such as child-rearing and care-giving, "...which are so thoroughly intersubjective" (Benhabib and Cornell, 1986:2).

One of the consequences of adherence to the production model as paradigmatic of human activity is the emphasis on external forms of domination. For Marx, productive relations take on a mystified form, allowing capital to present itself as objective and present its power as derived from natural relations rather than social relations of domination. As Erica Sherover-Marcuse (1986:126) suggests, Marx failed to theorize the materiality of mystified consciousness, that is, he failed to recognize that "...mystified consciousness is not merely a set of false ideas or illusions but that it encompasses modes of being, ways of acting and of experiencing oneself and one's existence to which people have become accustomed, attached and even 'addicted' on an affective level". It is the materiality of experienced forms of mystified consciousness that "congeals into 'character structures' and 'personality types'", what Sherover-Marcuse calls "naturalized and normalized cages for the individuals who inhabit them". By focusing on the reproduction of domination at the level of the system, Marxism failed to comprehend the significance of the reproduction of

domination at the level of individual subjectivities.

Feminist theory and practice has long recognized the subjective dimension of the reproduction of domination -- it was this recognition that has made 'consciousness-raising' an essential part of feminist struggle. Yet a feminist theory of subjectivity must be construed in a fundamentally different manner than in terms of the opposition of femininity and individuality as it has appeared in even self-labelled critical approaches.

4.3 The Autonomous Ego?

a. The Early Frankfurt School

It was the lack of a theory of subjectivity that led to attempts at a synthesis of Freud and Marx, most notably by key figures associated with the Frankfurt School, in the twentieth century.

Inspired by the earlier Hegelian Marxism of Lukacs and Korsch, members of the Frankfurt School turned increasingly away from production to the analysis of culture and ideology in an attempt to theorize the eclipse of class consciousness. Central here was the insistence on a psychological component to the Marxian theory of false consciousness -- "...that the equation of false consciousness with ideologies must be supplemented by a psychological analysis of the motivations behind their acceptance" (Jay, 1984:204). Thus came the first systematic integration of Freudian psychoanalysis into Marxist

theory, initially undertaken by Erich Fromm. The focal point for this integration of Freud and Marx in Critical Theory was to be elaborated in their analysis of the family. The family was the site of the development of subjectivity, the meeting point of individual and society. The central interest here was in uncovering the social creation of psychological structures conducive to domination. As Fromm put it, "...the family is the medium through which the society or the social class stamps its specific structure on the child, and hence on the adult. The family is the psychological agency of society" (1978:483).

In Horkheimer's "Authority and the Family", the family occupies a contradictory space in capitalist society -- on the one hand, it "educates for authority in bourgeois society", yet on the other it "cultivates the dream of a better condition for mankind" (Horkheimer, 1972:114). While enmeshed in market relationships, the family nonetheless offers an emancipatory potential. As echoed in later writers such as Lasch, the family is portrayed here as a refuge from the public world where individuals can escape from instrumentality, where they can be treated as human beings, not objects. Yet Horkheimer also realizes the price this extracts from women:

> ...the present-day family is a source of strength to resist the total dehumanization of the world and contains an element of antiauthoritarianism. But it must also be recognized that because of her dependence woman herself has been changed....her own development is lastingly restricted (Ibid., 118)

The emancipatory potential, then, is only for males, and rests in the maintenance of patriarchal authority in the family. Following a Freudian theory of socialization, Horkheimer posits that the internalization of paternal authority by sons is the internalization of both bourgeois authority and the autonomy to resist authority. Unfortunately, this autonomy is not available to women, and as paternal authority wanes under the increasingly administered society, it becomes less available to males. Thus, Horkheimer and Adorno are later forced to lament the decline of patriarchy as leading to the decline of the autonomous individual, and thus the decline of any possibility of emancipatory subjectivities. In their hands, the "decline of subjectivity" became central -- the notion that human beings had become so totally dominated that there was no possibility of emancipatory struggle. Theory become ideology critique, with little relation to praxis. As Agger (1977:16) notes:

> ...both economism and critical theory withdrew from the imperative of revolutionary practice, the one thinking that the revolution would occur without subjectivity (or, strictly speaking, that the correct subjectivity would arise automatically in response to economic suffering), the other thinking that subjectivity did not exist.

b. Habermas

I have referred earlier to Habermas's 'reconstruction' of historical materialism based on the distinction between labour and interaction, and between system interaction and social interaction. Within this model, Habermas also seeks to insert

a cognitive and moral dimension which he claims overcomes the philosophy of the subject which has plagued Marxism. Essentially, what he is positing is an evolutionary model of social change in which not only structure is transformed, but the subject, and the subject-structure relationship. That is, a transformation in social formation requires a transformation in individual identity and character.

Habermas explicitly rejects both the pessimism and the uni-dimensional conception of rationalization embodied in the work of the earlier Frankfurt theorists. As Morrow (1988:3) summarizes it, "...whereas the early studies were concerned primarily with the social psychology of domination", Habermas is also concerned with "...an orientation toward grounding normative claims and a constructive theory of emancipation". Where for Horkheimer and Adorno, the spread of instrumental rationality increasingly subordinates all levels of existence -- production, culture, personality -- to its logic of calculation, Habermas introduces a more complex model of social development. Reconstructing historical materialism to reflect the distinction between labour and interaction, he posits two distinct types of rationalization -- social and cultural, with the latter inserting a moral dimension in the form of 'collective learning'. In addition, drawing on the developmental models of Piaget and Kohlberg, Habermas incorporates a cognitive dimension into his model of societal

evolution. He thus denies the implied 'functional fit' between the economy, culture and personality (Benhabib, 1986:230). As developed in his theory of communicative action, he proposes that historical materialism must be reconstructed on a reconceptualized relationship between system integration (instrumental rationality) and social integration (communicative rationality), with the latter centred on the 'lifeworld'. For Habermas, the separation of system and lifeworld is an historical process. The lifeworld is the locus of the intersection of structure and agency. Through this strategy, he claims to have overcome the philosophy of the subject which assumed a 'transcendental consciousness', by focusing on 'concrete forms of life':

> In culturally embodied self-understandings, intuitively present group solidarities, and the competencies of socialized individuals that are brought into play as know-how, the reason expressed in communicative action is mediated with the traditions, social practices, and body-centred complexes of experience that coalesce into particular totalities (Habermas, 1987:326).

The theory of the subject suggested by Habermas may be termed a "developmental subject" (Morrow, 1988). It is with this conception of the subject that he revives the 'autonomous ego' abandoned by Adorno and Horkheimer. Yet, as will be elaborated below, he retains an androcentric view of the subject -- a view premised upon the abstract individual, which, since the very 'discovery' of the individual in social philosophy, has been

inherently male.

c. The Feminist Critique of the Autonomous Ego

From Hegel, through Marx and the early Frankfurt School, to the most recent work by Habermas, some notion of the 'autonomous ego' -- the fully individuated and somehow disembodied subject -- has been the presupposition of any theory of resistance. Yet as Stephanie Engel (1980:103) notes, this ideal, "...virtually untouched since the Enlightenment...is not in any a priori sense a moral or human given". Most significantly, feminist theorists "... have begun to articulate conceptions of autonomy that are premised not simply on separation but also on the experiences of mutuality, relatedness and the recognition of an other as a full subject." This entails not a rejection of the concept of autonomy, but a critical reinterpretation.

I want to focus here on the recent body of feminist work which has radically questioned the conceptions of autonomy and individuality in these 'critical' social psychologies. Of particular interest here are Jessica Benjamin's critique of Adorno and Horkheimer, Carol Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg and Seyla Benhabib's critique of Habermas.

For Benjamin, what is lacking in the social psychology of Adorno and Horkheimer is a concept of intersubjectivity -- "of subject to subject relations":

> The world is not conceived of as an intersubjective realm in which the objects encountered are really

> themselves subjects who have the capacity to act and be affected by another's actions (1977:49).

Lacking this concept, they are forced into an uncritical acceptance of a Freudian conception of the ego, tied to the internalization of authority, inherently resulting in the view that "...authority is in some sense seen as necessary or even vindicated" (Ibid.;42). The product is an individual psychology rather than a social, intersubjective psychology, which undermines the critical project of emancipation. The consequences for women are most clearly drawn out in their analysis of the family. Through their reliance on a Freudian internalization of paternal authority as the basis of the later rejection of authority on the part of autonomous (male) individuals, they collapse individuality into masculinity. Benjamin offers a reinterpretation of emancipatory potential based not upon identification with the paternal authority figure, but "...based on identification with others stemming from awareness of one's own suffering and oppression. The knowledge which is based upon paying attention to one's feelings and denied aspirations implies, ultimately, a different view of human nature and civilizing process as well" (1978:56).

Gilligan's (1982) critique of Kohlberg's developmental psychology remains a key work in the feminist critique of the 'autonomous ego'. Kohlberg posits 6 stages of moral

development, the sixth and highest stage representing universalistic reasoning. It rests on a conception of justice rooted in a "rights conception of morality" which "...is geared to arriving at an objectively fair or just resolution to moral dilemmas upon which all rational persons could agree" (Gilligan, 1982:19-20). Women appear to be stuck in a lower level of development, in a conception of morality based on caring, and responsibility for others. Gilligan argues that Kohlberg's masculine bias fails to consider the greater emphasis that women place on context and the concrete effects of their decisions on other people. As she summarizes it:

> The elusive mystery of women's development lies in its recognition of the continuing importance of attachment in the human life cycle. Woman's place in man's life cycle is to protect this recognition while the developmental litany intones the celebration of separation, autonomy, individuation and natural rights (Ibid.:23)

While Gilligan's work has been rightly criticized for making generalizations about gendered ethics based on a sample of white, middle-class, American girls, and for a tendency to over-romanticize women's moral decision-making processes,[4] what is important about her work is the questions it raises about a universalistic ethic based on principles of abstract, versus concrete, individualism.

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[4]For critiques of Gilligan, see, among others, Auerbach et. al. (1985), Segal (1987), Fraser and

Gilligan's insights have been usefully developed by Seyla Benhabib (1986, 1987) in her critique of Habermas's developmental subject. For Benhabib, Habermas ultimately fails by restricting the ideal of autonomy to the standpoint of the 'generalized other':

> This results in a corresponding inability to treat human needs, desires, and emotions in any other way than by abstracting away from them and by condemning them to silence....Institutional justice is thus seen as representing a higher stage of moral development than interpersonal responsibility, care, love, and solidarity; the respect for rights and duties is regarded as prior to care and concern about another's need; moral cognition precedes moral affect; the mind, we may summarize, is the sovereign of the body, and reason, the judge of inner nature (1985:342).

Benhabib suggests, in contrast, that the perspectives of the 'generalized other' and the 'concrete other' must be treated as complementary, that the "...ideal community of communication corresponds to an ego identity which allows the unfolding of the relation to the concrete other on the basis of autonomous action" (Ibid.). Thus, while endorsing the paradigm shift from production to communication, she seeks to re-orient Habermas's disembodied, autonomous ego to recognition of the concrete and particular.

What is important to all these critiques is the emphasis on intersubjectivity, recognition of the particularity of others, and rejection of the privileging of reason over affectivity which is implied in androcentric models of

individuated, autonomous subjectivity.

The familiar Cartesian dualism of mind/body underlies the 'disembedding' of the reasoning, mature, capable-of-resistance social actor. Habermas notes that "...reason ... has no body, cannot suffer, and also arouses no passion" (Habermas,1982:221), yet himself clings to such a concept of the reasoning subject. It seems appropriate then to begin by conceptualizing the subject as an embodied subject. Bodies, of course, are necessary to any conception of human beings as agents, actors, or individuals. A body is necessary to the concept of labour -- it is with the body that one presents oneself as a labourer and performs work. A body is especially important when we wish to speak about subjects as 'men' or 'women', as it is the most obvious signifier of which of those categories an individual might fall into. It is only through recognition of embodiment that we can recognize particularity. Yet almost without exception, theories of the subject, and of subjectivity, treat self-awareness and consciousness as somehow dependent on transcending bodily existence, rather than as coming to terms with it. It is on this point that feminist theories of the subjects have both flourished and floundered -- flourished in their exposing of the androcentric bias of grand theories of 'unencumbered selves' and floundered in implicitly or explicitly replicating gender polarity, or the binary opposition of male and female, rooted in bodily existence. In

feminist theories of the subject, it has become an opposition between 'essentialism' and 'nominalism' (Alcoff, 1988).

4.4 Feminist Theories of the Subject: Essentialism versus Nominalism

a. Feminist Essentialism: Biology, Philosophy and History

The tendency towards essentialism in socialist-feminist theory is linked to the underlying humanism of Marxist social theory in general -- the assumption of "...common essential features in terms of which human beings can be defined and understood" (Soper, 1986:12). It is this core of humanity that makes sense of such conceptual terms as alienation, consciousness and agency.

Feminist essentialism is by no means a unitary stream of thought. I would identify three types of essentialist thinking, each resting on different sorts of arguments about how biological difference is transformed into subjective difference -- biological essentialism, philosophical essentialism, and historical reification. The specificity of the female body, and in particular its connection to the reproduction of the species, is implicated in each argument. Thus, each form of essentialism is, in a sense, biological, but the nature of the arguments developed differ considerably.

1. Biological Essentialism

Biological essentialism, while usually roundly denounced, characterizes a range of feminist theory. Examples here are

Shulamith Firestone (1970), Mary Daly (1978) and Adrienne Rich (1977). Firestone attempted to build a materialist analysis, not of economic class, but of 'sex class'. The basis of her account is that "(U)nlike economic class, sex class sprang directly from a biological reality: men and women were created different, and not equally privileged" (1970:8). Women, she suggests, are "at the continual mercy of their biology", which makes them dependent on males for survival. She conflates biology with procreation, and outlines a feminist strategy as the development and control of technology which will liberate women from their biological enslavement. Thus, Firestone deplores biology as the basis, not of women's identity in any constructive sense, but of an identity which grounds their oppression.

Daly (1978) evaluates female biology more positively, and theorizes a biological essentialism which privileges women. Women are life-giving and hence life-affirming -- men are barren and thus must prey on female energy. Men are "parasitic", they "passionately identify" with the fetus, they aspire to be "supermothers controlling biological mothers":

> The male "mother's" spiritual "fecundity" depends upon his fetal (fatal) fettering of the female to whom he eternally attaches himself by a male-made umbilical cord, extracting nutrients and excreting waste (as he does also with "Mother Earth"). The penis, of course, is both a material and symbolic instrument for the restoration and maintenance of this umbilical attachment (Daly, 1978:60-1).

Daly clearly finds the male/female analog in culture/ nature, positing a continuity between femaleness and nature in which lies true humanity. Men are thus a threat to women/nature, inescapably due to their biological inability to give and affirm life.

Rich (1977:21) also posits a direct relationship between women's biology and their consciousness:

> ...female biology -- the diffuse, intense sensuality radiating out from clitoris, breasts, uterus, vagina; the lunar cycles of menstruation; the gestation and fruition of life which can take place in the female body -- has far more radical implications than we have yet come to appreciate....We must touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, our bond with the natural order, the corporeal ground of our intelligence.

Both Daly and Rich encourage feminism to embrace women's biological specificity as the grounding of a woman-centred valorization of 'femaleness'. It is our biology which gives us our essence.

2. Philosophical essentialism

Philosophical essentialism is best represented by Simone de Beauvoir and Mary O'Brien, both of whom have provided tremendously influential theories of gender-differentiated subjectivity in which women's sense of self is located in the particularity of the female body, but a particularity in the metaphysical sense.

Simone de Beauvoir writes in The Second Sex (1961) that "One is not born but becomes a woman". This fundamental

precept is the girder of feminist social theory. It would seem to belie a biological essentialism, but the manner in which de Beauvoir develops it stands firmly on a philosophical essentialism, rooted in women's bodily existence.[5] In the introductory section on 'destiny', de Beauvoir rejects the respective 'monisms' of biological determinism, psychoanalysis (Freud) and historical materialism (Engels). Her strategy is to incorporate certain insights of each of these into a more culturally sensitive framework, asserting that "The value of muscular strength, of the phallus, of the tool can be defined only in a world of values; it is determined by the basic project through which the existent seeks transcendence" (55). The rest of the book is primarily an exploration of the means by which culture 'cuts off' the feminine body from the possibility of transcendence. Central to the denial of transcendence to women is their 'enslavement to the generative function' (108). This enslavement is the basis for her invocation of the universality of women as 'Other', a category "...as primordial as consciousness itself" (xvi). By clinging

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[5]The difference between de Beauvoir's philosophical essentialism and Firestone's biological essentialism is best summarized by Firestone herself: "Why postulate a fundamental Hegelian concept of otherness as the final explanation -- and then carefully document the biological and historical circumstances that have pushed the class "woman" into such a category -- when one has never seriously considered the much simpler and more likely possibility that this fundamental dualism sprang from the sexual division itself?" (Firestone, 1970;7)

to a Hegelian notion of transcendence as transcendence of the body, she posits that as long as women are bound by their reproductive capacities, they will remain the eternal 'Other', unable to attain full autonomy. It is a reproductive entrapment of consciousness.

O'Brien's critique of de Beauvoir centres on the latter's entirely negative interpretation of the reproductive experience:

> She sees human reproduction as indistinguishable from that of other animal species, making reproductive labour a labour immune to the interpretations of a rational consciousness and incapable of forming an authentically human consciousness (O'Brien, 1981;75).

O'Brien posits a reproductive consciousness, again rooted in bodily existence, which provides a privileged continuity to women which is denied to men. Men are <u>forced</u> to transcend their bodily existence, in a vain attempt to artificially capture reproductive continuity. Thus, against de Beauvoir, who analyzed human reproduction as essentially alienating for women, O'Brien finds it alienating for men. The reproductive process thus creates two gender-specific types of consciousness. The implications of this analysis include a twist on Freud's dictum of anatomy as destiny: "Men are necessarily rooted in biology, and their physiology is their fate" (O'Brien, 1981; 192).

Thus, both de Beauvoir and O'Brien, while differently evaluating the biological experience of reproduction for women's subjectivity, locate an essential gendered subjectivity in the bodily parameters of reproduction. Both invoke a universal principle of consciousness which, interpreted in terms of reproductive imperatives, privileges one sex over the other, and creates a gender-differentiated subjectivity.

3. Historical reification

Most socialist-feminist theory tends toward essentialism based on a historical reification of women's experience and a corresponding reification of 'gender identity'. Taking their cue from Marx, they locate subjectivity and consciousness not in a biological or philosophical essence, but in human activity (primarily as it is organized under capitalism). Gender identity is rooted in the sexual division of labour. One of the first, and most influential statements of this stream of thought was developed by Rosaldo (1974), who posited that women's lower status was the result of a universal division of human activity into 'public' and 'private' spheres, with women confined to the 'private' sphere.[6] The private sphere was that which was organized around mothers and their children -- work in this sphere, done by women, was always valued less than work done in the public sphere by men. Chodorow (1978), Dinnerstein

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[6]Rosaldo modified her position somewhat in an article published shortly before her death. See Rosaldo (1980).

(1976) and Ortner (1974) all draw on this public/private split, and women's role in mothering within the private sphere, as crucial in the development of gender identity. The historical reification and conflation of public/private, production/reproduction, male/female also characterizes the bulk of Marxist-feminist theory which focused on the gendered division of labour in capitalism as rooted in the exigencies of biological reproduction. In a strong statement of this position, Armstrong and Armstrong (1983;9) base their argument on the fact that "women, not men, have babies":

> ...free wage labour, which is essential to the very definition of capitalism, entails the reproduction of labour power primarily at another location. This separation under capitalism between commodity production and human reproduction (including the reproduction of the commodity labour power) in turn implies a particular division of labour between the sexes, and thus a division within classes. It is a division that...is fundamental to the under-standing of how the capitalist production system operates at all levels of abstraction and of how and under what conditions people will rebel.

This is the material basis of 'the' ideology of gender, and the construction of femininity and masculinity (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1984b).

Several important challenges to essentialist formulations of women's nature can be identified. The first challenge comes from the dissenting voices of women of colour, lesbians, working-class women, and third-world women, as they entered feminist discourse, who found little resonance in their own

lives in the archetype of the dependent, heterosexual, Western, full-time mother upon which the historical reification of 'gender identity' was constructed.[7] In a sense, then, much feminist theory has reiterated the construction of a bourgeois subject (as did the earlier attempts at Freudo-Marxian synthesis) based on the experience of the white, bourgeois two-parent household. Another challenge comes from recent historical investigation of the meaning of 'gender' which illustrates that it is far from a stable conceptual category (Riley, 1988). Another lesson from Marx might be heeded -- that:

> ...even the most abstract categories, despite their validity -- precisely because of their abstractness -- for all epochs are nevertheless, in the specific character of this abstraction, themselves likewise a product of historical relations, and possess their full validity only for and within those relations (1971:105)

Another important challenge is linked with the more general critique of humanism embodied in the proliferation of

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[7]See, for example, Frye (1983), Hooks (1984), Joseph (1981), Lugones and Spelman (1983).

postmodernist theories.[8]

b. Deconstructing 'Woman': Postmodernist Feminism

Several recent contributions to the feminist literature have suggested an affinity between the feminist project and the work of a number of postmodern theorists (Flax, 1986; Fraser and Nicholson, 1988; Harding, 1986a; Weedon, 1987). The hallmark of postmodernism is an incredulity towards meta-narratives, and an attitude of 'deconstruction' -- the rejection of the concept of the humanist subject, whose essential core is repressed by society and who lies in wait of our peeling back of culture to find it. Post-modernist, post-structuralist feminism approaches the subject and subjectivity in a way that poses a radical challenge to essentialism. Drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis, Derridean deconstruction, and/or Foucauldian discourse theory, post-structuralist feminisms seek to deconstruct any notion of 'the feminine subject'.[9] For Julia Kristeva, one of the key figures of the

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[8]Michele Barrett, in a new introduction to the 1988 edition of Women's Oppression Today has recognized the importance of all these critiques of feminist essentialism and suggests that if she were writing the book today, she would pay much more attention to ethnicity and to the post-modernist challenge, recognizing that they call into question many of the assumptions of her book. It is greatly disappointing, then, that she chose not to revise the arguments of the original text, but merely to pay lip service to these important challenges in a tacked-on introduction.

[9]To date, post-structuralist feminism has had more impact on feminist literary criticism and philosophy in North America than it has had in the social sciences. See, for example the

(continued...)

'new French feminisms' which exemplify this trend in feminist theory, the very dichotomy of man/woman as the basis of identity is metaphysical. She asks:"What can "identity", even "sexual identity", mean in a new theoretical and scientific space where the very notion of identity is challenged?" (1981:51-2). The focus of analysis is shifted from the subject as a manifestation of her/his 'essence' to the 'subject in process' -- never unitary, never complete. Rather than looking to universals such as reproductive capacities, our gaze is directed to the realm of the symbolic -- most significantly, language -- as implicated most centrally in the construction of 'men' and 'women'. This is captured in Kristeva's conception of the 'speaking subject'. Language is not an expression of some pre-existing subjectivity -- instead, "an individual's subjectivity is constituted in language for her every time she speaks" (Weedon, 1987: 88). 'Femininity', for Kristeva, is not a property of the subject, but of language. As such, its meaning can never be fixed.

One of the problems with post-modernist, post-

'(...continued)
collection edited by Allen and Young (1989). I will focus here on the work of Kristeva for two reasons. First, Kristeva's work has appeared to have had a more far-reaching impact on feminist work in the social sciences than that of her contemporaries such as Irigaray or Cixous. Secondly, Kristeva exemplifies nominalism most clearly, whereas Irigaray, for example, tends to lapse into a peculiar essentialism based on irretrievably sexed bodies. See Gross (1986) for a comparison of Kristeva and Irigaray.

structuralist approaches is the loss of any notion of collective experience or struggle. To speak of women as a collectivity implies a pre-given identity, and thus reconfirms both the subjectification and subjugation of women. In addition, Alcoff (1988:419) finds a feminist adoption of nominalism prone to the same problems as Marxist theories of ideology. That is, "Why is a right-wing woman's consciousness constructed via social discourse but a feminist's conscious not? Post-structuralist critiques of subjectivity pertain to the construction of all subjects or they pertain to none."

c. What is a Woman? Essentialism versus Nominalism Reconsidered

The essentialism/nominalism debate in feminist theory has recently been posed by Michele Barrett (1988b) as a continuum, with neither pole representing a satisfactory point of departure. Clearly gender cannot be treated in the manner of a Durkheimian social fact, with the acquisition of gender seen as the "...acquisition of a social identity that is already there" (Barrett, 1988; 268). Yet neither, as Barrett goes on to point out, can we begin from the assumption that "...there is no such fixed social category already there but, rather, that the meaning of gender...is constructed anew in every encounter" (Ibid.). I think that the effectiveness of our theory and our politics rests not on finding some 'middle ground' between these two poles, but by grasping both poles simultaneously,

with all their contradictions. Paul Smith, in his recent interrogation of the concept of the 'subject' in social theory, finds feminism paradigmatic in this respect, suggesting that "By dint of this acceptation of the doubled nature of the "subject's" existence, feminism provides a view which counters the long and continuing history of (phallocratic) cerning[10] of the "subject"" (1988;152). This is exemplified by the work of Denise Riley, who suggest that:

> (I)nstead of veering between deconstruction and transcendence, we could try another train of speculation: that 'woman' is indeed an unstable category, that this instability has a historical foundation, and that feminism is the site of the systematic fighting-out of that instability (1988:5).

There is an inherent tension between the term 'woman' as a theoretical construct which implies gender as universally constitutive of the subject, and the realities of really existing 'women' who may or may not share a unified 'gender identity'. Recognizing this tension, it seems more appropriate to speak of 'gendered identities', implying a recognition of plurality and difference without abandoning the notion that gender does play a part in constituting the subject. It is precisely the conflict and the tension between the centred and

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[10]Smith (1988:xxx) explains his use of the term:
The word 'cerning' conflates and plays simultaneously upon two rarely used English verbs --'to cern' and 'to cerne'. The first means 'to accept an inheritance or a patrimony'....(the second) means 'to encircle' or 'to enclose'...

decentred conceptions of the subject in feminist theory that contains the potential for theorizing resistive agency, on the part of both collective and individual subjects.

There is another level of tension -- that between gendered subjects and gendered structures -- that is also integral to developing feminist theory. Theorizing gender exclusively at the level of the subject risks letting social relations disappear from the realm of sexuality and gender, allowing gender to be seen as primarily located in the individual. This is one of the problems with 'reproduction of mothering' approaches, which identify woman-centred child rearing as the mechanism by which subjectivities become gendered. The implication here is that subjective change will lead to social change. Gender is not only the psychic ordering of biological difference, it is also the social ordering of that difference. This point is neatly summarized by Paul Smith (1988:77), who asserts that:

> ...psychoanalytically informed explanations of the relationship between "subject" and other cannot be taken as if they were the last word in the theorizing of subjectivity, but always must be brought back round to a historicizing discussion of the ideologies and institutions (and thus the interests and practices) upon which subjectivity is predicated and which it serves.

Clearly it is essential to retain an awareness of both levels if we are to adequately grasp both domination and resistance.

Gordon (1986:23) notes that the contradiction between domination and resistance in studying women's history has its parallel in the structure versus agency debate in Marxism.

> This debate unfortunately has often been reduced to a schema in which structural analysis implies determination, while analysis in terms of human agency implies indeterminacy or contingency.... Usually it is the dominant groups who can have individual agency, while the subordinated appear locked in "structures".

In a recent work, Bryan Turner (1987:195) suggests that "sociology needs to develop a perspective on resistance and resignation as the counterpart to the overriding emphasis on control and management". While I fully sympathize with his project, rather than seeing the theorization of resistance and resignation as a counterpart to the theorization of control and management, I would suggest that they are in fact part of the same project. That is, resistance only occurs within parameters of control, and resignation within management, and vice versa. One cannot conceive of one without the other. Turner suggests a threefold conceptualization of an 'ontology of human resistance': enselfment, embodiment and empowerment. By enselfment, he refers to "the capacity for consciousness of one's particularity" (1987:195). This has some resonance with Gidden's notion of 'self-monitoring' or self-reflexive behaviour on the part of actors as fundamental to the theorization of the individual in the individual/society relationship. The notion of embodiment rejects the Cartesian

mind/body split, and emphasizes that "our actions are the actions of embodied agency rather than a socialized will" (Ibid.:197). Finally, the dimension of empowerment implies a "capacity for action on the part of knowledgeable, embodied agents capable of conscious experience and effectivity in the everyday world". Turner conceptualizes these dimensions of the agent as parallel to certain structural dimensions of society: enselfment as corresponding to the ideological, embodiment as corresponding to the economic, and empowerment as corresponding to the political. It is in setting up these correspondences that Turner exposes his masculinist bias, for only male bodies and the male experience of embodiment can be so neatly separated from ideological and political discourses. In locating the body as a site of resistance, Turner suggests that bodily needs require engagement with pre-existing social relations and social structures mediated by consumptive practices, creating a certain dependency, yet "we clearly enjoy a certain sovereignty and spontaneity over our phenomenal embodiment" (Ibid.,199). It is historically women's lack of sovereignty over their bodies, that is, the ideological and political, not just economic, control of their bodies, which has grounded, and continues to ground, their experience of embodiment in a way that is fundamentally different from that

of the male.[11] With Turner, I would agree that embodiment is a crucial component of an ontology of resistance, but against him, I would argue that embodiment must be construed as gendered -- a dimension which he neglects to recognize, and one which has profound consequences for his theorization of enselfment and empowerment.

At the social level, gender both describes and imposes an order on individuals. The gender order provides the 'mode of interpretation' through which individuals construct a subjective and social identity. As Seyla Benhabib (1987:80) puts it, it is "...the grid through which the self develops an embodied identity, a certain mode of being in one's body and of living the body". It is "...the grid through which societies and cultures reproduce embodied individuals" (Ibid.). At the subjective level, gender thus becomes "...the corporeal locus of cultural meanings both received and innovated" (Butler, 1987:128). It is a "...tacit project to renew a cultural history in one's own corporeal terms" (Ibid.: 131).

I want to argue that one of the key aspects of 'subjectivity', of 'consciousness', of 'identity' -- be it classed, gendered, or raced -- is coming to terms with, or

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[11]Consider here the very recent criminalization of marital rape and the struggles over contraception and abortion. Turner's analysis could similarly be seen as heterosexually centred, as gay activism has embodied another form of political and ideological struggle which centres on the body.

learning to inhabit, one's body. This is not a project which 'ends' with the successful resolution of a predetermined set of 'stages', as the classical Freudian account would have it. Nor is it the basis for some unifying essence among those who share similar bodies, as certain feminist accounts would suggest. It is an ongoing process, a continual renegotiation of the relationship between self and others. It is both a 'sensual' and a cultural project which cannot be evaded through evocation of the 'autonomous' ego who somehow manages to transcend the bodily aspects of existence. Thus, not even the theoretically 'disembodied' male, who relies on the services of a subordinate female to mediate his relationship to his bodily needs, escapes a corporeally grounded existence. To have a relationship to one's body which is mediated by another does not eliminate the relationship, it only changes it. By challenging the mind/body dualism, feminism also challenges the historically prescribed relationship between culture and biology which contains their autonomy.

I would argue as well that the opposition between autonomy and mutuality, or relatedness, must be subverted, to be seen as integral to the development of subjectivity. As Roslyn Bologh (1987:151) suggests, "The tension between a commitment to individual rights and a commitment to relationship must be maintained as a tension internal to moral reasoning itself". The individual/society (or individual/

community) relationship must be seen as at least partially an internal tension, not totally externalized as classical theory has portrayed it. Thus the tension between public and private, political and personal, mind and body, masculine and feminine, must also be seen as an internal struggle in the construction of identities.

In a recent and provocative article, Drucilla Cornell and Adam Thurschwell (1986:144) suggest such an approach, arguing that "...gender categories themselves retain indelible traces of their Other, belying the rigid identification of one's self as a fully gender-differentiated subject". This is not a new, more sophisticated concept of androgyny. Androgyny -- the idea that one could combine 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits in one personality -- conjures up visions, as Mary Daly (1978;xi) so aptly describes it, of John Travolta and Farrah Fawcett scotch-taped together. Androgyny replicates, rather than subverts, the logic of gender polarity. Instead, the recognition of internally contradictory processes in the constitution of gendered identities recasts the Hegelian struggle for identity, suggesting that "...the dialectic of identity and difference plays itself out on the level of subjectivity as a construct" (Cornell and Thurschwell,1987:159). This poses a radical challenge to essentialist formulations of gender polarity, in that essentialism "...misrepresents the self-difference of the gendered subject. It restricts the play of difference that

marks every attempt to confirm identity" (Ibid.:161). At the same time, it avoids the lapse into nominalism.

4.5 Gendered Identities as Interpreted Identities

It is the recognition, and reclaiming, of the tension between individual and society, between subject and structure, that allows us to proceed in dialectical fashion in reconceptualizing gendered (or classed, or raced) identities as interpreted identities. By interpreted, I mean multiple, often contradictory, and actively interpreted according to certain historically available modes of interpretation. Conceiving of gendered identities as interpreted identities allows us to tread the precarious path between essentialism and nominalism and between agency and determination. To express in another way the two poles of the debate which need to be grasped simultaneously, the content of gender is infinitely variable and continually in flux, yet the salience of gender categories is persistent. It requires a recognition of the positioning of gendered subjects both materially and ideologically, yet always interpreted in terms of a gender polarity. It is on these ground that we can explore, as Marx did in his analysis of commodity fetishism, how the social relations of domination embodied in gender polarity become invisible, personal and seemingly natural.

A number of useful concepts for developing this sort of analysis of gender and of gendered subjectivities may be

gleaned from recent feminist work. Matthews (1984) introduces the term 'gender order' to name the historically constructed web of power relations between men and women. She describes the gender order as a material and ideological grid, a system of power relations that "...turns barely differentiated babies into either women or men of the approved types, thereafter keeping them to the mark as the definitions change" (my emphasis). Other orderings, such as race and class, "...cut across the gender order and deflect and modify it" (Ibid:13-14). It is in this complex of orderings that social meaning is created. To speak of a gender order is to speak of the manner in which sexual difference becomes social inequality -- the 'building up' of differences into an ordering of relationships. At this level, it is an abstraction, and could be matriarchal, patriarchal or egalitarian in specific content.[12] Fleshing out the content of the gender order requires historical investigation, and a recognition that it is always in flux:

> The specific nature or content of any gender order is constantly in process, being formed and changed. It is fashioned by the actions of individuals who are themselves formed in that interaction. It is created in the struggles and power strategies and contradictions and unintended consequences of a

[12]By way of analogy, Matthews (1984:14) suggests that "...we can talk of an economic order as being the ordering of people's relationships to the means of production and consumption which exist in every society. Such an ordering has no essential nature, but may be variously feudal or capitalist or communist."

> multitude of social groups and individuals and interests....The femininity and masculinity that are forged of these countervailing forces are never constant but always changing and, more often than not, internally inconsistent if not contradictory (Matthews,1984:14-5).

Thus, we can speak of a gender order as being 'patriarchal' -- that is, as constructing the masculine as dominant over the feminine -- without lapsing into the transhistorical, agentless conception of 'patriarchy'. A gender order begins with embodiment -- the existence of males and females as inhabitants of different bodies and their self-awareness of such -- and is elaborated through the historical construction of biological difference into essential psychological and social differences between 'women' and 'men'. As Matthews (1984:16) summarizes it: "Women as social beings are biological entities and self-aware identities who live within the strategies of prescription and punishment of the gender order". It is the gender order, then, that provides the grid for regulating gender identities, both materially and ideologically. However, we need a fuller account of the formation of gendered subjectivities in this configuration of power relations.

Alcoff (1988:431) suggests that we need "...to construe a gendered subjectivity in relation to concrete habits, practices, and discourses while at the same time recognizing the fluidity of these" (431). Citing de Laurentis (1986) and Riley (1983) as exemplars of such an approach, what is sugges-

ted is "... a subjectivity that gives agency to the individual while at the same time placing her within 'particular discursive configurations' and moreover, conceives of the process of consciousness as a strategy. Subjectivity may thus become imbued with race, class, and gender without being subjected to an overdetermination that erases agency" (425).

As Giddens (1982a:39) stresses, agency is knowledgeable, yet occurs in a dialectic of control -- that is, questions of power and domination must be related to the premise that social actors know a great deal about the circumstances of their action.[13] As Burton (1985;127) notes, the negotiation and construction of options is done from different vantage points, and some are more powerful than others. Alcoff (1988:433) calls this 'positionality':

> When the concept 'woman' is defined not by a particular set of attributes but by a particular position, the internal characteristics of the person thus identified are not denoted so much as the external context within which that person is situated. The external situation determines the person's relative position, just as the position of a pawn on a chessboard is considered safe or dangerous, powerful or weak, according to its relation to the other chess pieces....(This) makes her identity relative to a constantly shifting

[13]While Giddens raises some important questions with respect to structure and agency, I'm not convinced that his 'structuration theory' has the right answers. A central problem with his formulation is a somewhat ahistorical depiction of the linkage between subject and structure, which is a consequence of his reliance on the structure of language as paradigmatic of structure in general.

> context, to a situation that includes a network of elements involving others, the objective economic conditions, cultural and political institutions and ideologies, and so on.

The notion of positionality is useful in drawing together both subjectivity and structure as they converge in the individual, and suggests that gender identity is not only relational to a given set of external conditions, but that "...the position women find themselves in can be actively utilized...as a place from where meaning is constructed, rather than simply the place from where a meaning can be discovered (the meaning of femaleness)" (434). There is thus a retention from the post-structuralist critique, particularly that of Foucault, of a not entirely negative assessment of power. If we tie this back into Matthew's (1984) notion of a gender order, as an 'ideological and material grid' which is '...created in the struggles and power strategies and contradictions and unintended consequences of a multitude of social groups and individuals and interests' (14-15), constantly in flux, then we have a starting point for understanding how knowledgeable, acting subjects may nonetheless tend to participate in the legitimation of the conditions which reproduce their 'position'.

The concept of 'negotiated consciousness' is suggested by Sarah Eisenstein's (1983) historical study of American working women in the early 20th century, and provides a useful

analytical orientation for the interpretation of people's reasons for acting as they do. The attitudes people express, and the reasons they give for their actions, must be interpreted in the context of a realm of possibilities. For example, Beechey (1987;145) cautions that it is important to distinguish between the role of familial ideology, which asserts that a woman's primary responsibilities are those of housewife and mother, and the concrete constraints which caring for children and other dependents impose upon certain women. Riley (1983:194) suggests that this recognition of 'constraints' has significance for both our theorization of the feminine subject, and for political action:

> Even though it is true that arguing for adequate childcare as one obvious way of meeting the needs of mothers does suppose an orthodox division of labour, in which responsibility for children is the province of women and not of men, nevertheless this division is what, by and large, actually obtains. Recognition of that in no way commits you to supposing that the care of children is fixed eternally as female.

The subject, then, is positioned in both the ideological and 'real' senses. It seems that fruitful lines of inquiry here would be how the discrepancy between the ideal and lived reality is experienced, and how our activity can at the same time support the reproduction of existing relations or be a factor of resistance. Luxton (1986) captures this neatly in her follow-up study of women in Flin Flon, Manitoba. Women who were employed outside the home, yet held a traditional view of

the 'proper' sphere for women "...were compelled to mediate the contradiction":

> Their attempts to defend a strict gendered division of labour forced them deeper into the double day. Their actual experiences highlight the conditions under which support for right-wing 'pro-family' reform movements is generated, for in their opinion it is their paid work that creates the problem (Luxton, 1987:50).

Certainly much of the power of the New Right lies in its delineation of a relatively narrow set of acceptable subject-positions. As Stuart Hall (1988:49) suggests in his analysis of Thatcherism, its power lies in being able to "...constitute new subject positions from which its discourses about the world make sense", to combine "...ideological elements into a discursive chain in such a way that the logic or unity of the discourse depends on the subject addressed assuming a number of specific subject positions". The historically specific effectiveness of certain subject-positions in either legitimating or contesting such a discourse illustrates the futility of theorizing subjectivity as fixed in its relationship to social structure -- an important charge against marxist humanism, which has tended to posit "...an a priori historical subject or notion of agency on which revolution is premised" (Aronowitz, 1988:523). This critique of marxist humanism is equally instructive for feminism, which in its totalizing, essentialist moments has tended to replicate this error. Yet, accepting the deconstructionist notion that the

constitution of the subject is simultaneously to constitute its subjection belies the potential for resistance that certain subject-positions embody. As Dews has commented in a critique of Foucault:

> ...his peremptory equation of subjectification and subjection erases the distinction between the enforcement of compliance with a determinate system of norms, and the formation of a reflexive consciousness which may subsequently be directed in a critical manner against the existing system of norms (cited in Soper, 1986:139).

Certain liberatory struggles (such as those on behalf of 'homosexuals' or 'working mothers') could only emerge once their corresponding subject-positions, or 'identities' were created.

The positioning of subjects in certain subject-positions is a key mode of legitimation. Yet the liberatory potential lies in the fluid manner in which interests/identities are formed both within and across subject-positions. A key political task, then, is the articulation of interests in particular ways. As Connell (1988;162) suggests: "The definition of a married woman's interests as being essentially those of her husband and children is the hegemonic pattern; the definition of her interests as those of a group of exploited women in a factory is subversive". Thus, the gender order, as a mode of interpretation, becomes a field of contestation over subject-positions, and contains the potential for 'crises of interest formation' (Ibid.).

4.6 The Politics of Gender Polarity

Gender polarity is the unread subtext of both social theory and social reality -- a subtext which is gradually being teased out and elaborated by feminist theory. It is through the politics of gender polarity that the struggle for identity is thrashed out by living subjects.

There are several issues that merit mention here. First, there is a need to reframe the individual/society relationship, inherited from the classical project, to recognize, not repress, the tension between internal and external forms of domination. Secondly, there is the need to recognize that part of that tension arises from the simultaneously social and individual project of constructing a seemingly unitary 'identity', or subjectivity, from a diverse web of positions which impose and in turn reproduce social interpretations of those positions. Third, it is necessary to build a socialist-feminist political strategy which takes into account the partial and precarious nature of gendered identities, while at the same time recognizing their salience in constituting both individual subjectivities and social realities.

How then, do we reconcile the theoretical subject 'woman' with the really existing subjects called 'women'? This poses a key question for both theory and political practice. How do we negotiate the treacherous course of rejecting the fiction of 'woman' as a given category, while at the same time recognizing

the need to fight for particular rights for 'women'? How do we avoid replicating and reinforcing the polarization of male/female that we criticize? On this point, I would agree with Denise Riley (1988:112), who has recently argued that, "...it is compatible to suggest that 'women' don't exist -- while maintaining a politics of 'as if they existed' -- since the world behaves as if they unambiguously did".

Gender polarity is constructed and regulated through numerous practices -- in the realms of labour, education, religion, language, media, jurisprudence, sexuality, just to name a few. I will focus, in the next chapter, on the role of the state in regulating permissible identities, and thus as central to the mode of interpretation. If gendered identities are to be construed as interpreted identities, then the field of legitimation and (potentially) contestation of the gender order must be construed as one of identity politics.

CHAPTER 5

IDENTITY POLITICS: REGULATING GENDER

5.1 Introduction

In an earlier chapter, I demonstrated the integral nature of gender divisions to the development of the capitalist economy. In this chapter, I want to build on that argument in examining the regulation of gendered identities in the realm of 'political discourse' and the contestation of identities embodied in feminism as a social movement.

The notion of 'regulation' is important to theories of social reproduction, if we are to avoid positing some cosmic laws by which social relations are automatically reproduced. As Lipietz (1988;14) puts it, "...the regulation of a social relation is the manner in which this relation is reproduced, notwithstanding its conflictual and contradictory character". Thus, we need to account not only for the conditions which allow the reproduction of certain social relations, but the processes by which social relations are "constituted and reconstituted", examining simultaneously "...the reproduction of social relation, their evolution, their crisis, and the invention of new social relations" (Ibid.).

As noted in the previous chapter, dominant socialist-feminist theories of the production and reproduction of 'gender identity' and the resulting asymmetry of gender relations have largely failed to take into account the 'conflictual and contradictory character' of those relations, tending to reify them in a way which makes their regulation and reproduction relatively unproblematic. Taking instead the perspective on gendered identities as actively interpreted, multiple and often contradictory, this chapter will build on work in the area of 'moral regulation' (Corrigan,1981a: Corrigan and Sayer,1985: Kinsman,1987: Valverde and Weir,1988). The focus of this work is the political regulation of permissible forms of identities -- the construction of appropriate subjects. As Gramsci (1971:271) noted, "...every state tends to create and maintain a certain type of civilization and of citizen (and hence of collective life and of individual relations)". As Corrigan and Sayer (1985) put it, "States, if the pun be forgiven, state. They define in great detail, acceptable forms and images of social activity and individual and collective identity; they regulate, in empirically specifiable ways much...of social life". States structure relationships and the parameters for interaction.

While the state is often taken to be <u>the</u> agent of moral regulation, this focus tends to obscure "...the complex relationships among state and non-state institutions involved

in developing and reproducing codes of moral regulation" (Valverde and Weir, 1988:31). Regulation here does not equal simply reactive measures necessary to maintain the social order. Regulation functions not only through direct control,[1] but by "...defining the parameters and content of choice, fixing how we come to want what we want" (Henriques et. al., 1984;219). Thus, I will examine not only the state, for it is important, but the broader arena of the "universe of political discourse" (Jenson,1986). To this end, I will review feminist perspectives on the state, and some recent theoretical discussions on the relationship of state, civil society and social movements, and sketch out a framework for analysis of the regulation of gender relations. As a means of illustration, I will then examine the 'war over the family' (Berger and Berger, 1983) as the key context of the regulation and construction of femininity in Canada, as well as the central focus of current struggles between feminism, anti-feminism and the state.

5.2 Theoretical Approaches to State and Civil Society

a. Studying the State

It is only within the last decade or so that the state has become central to feminist analysis. The tendency in

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[1]This is particularly true of liberal democracies which, at least on the rhetorical level, reject coercion as a means to secure order.

earlier feminist work to separate out one institution -- the family -- as the primary bearer of gender relations deflected attention from seeing political practice itself as constituted by gender inequalities. As Eisenstein (1988:53) suggests, law (which we might view as a crystallization of political practice) exists not alongside male privilege, but inside it.

Connell (1987:127-128) suggests four views of the state that might be used to inform feminist work in this area: liberal, Marxist, radical feminist and post-structuralist. None of these models in itself is adequate, yet in playing one off against the other, some valuable insights for theorizing the state and state policy may be gleaned.

The liberal view sees the state as a potentially neutral arbitrator, but one which has been captured by a particular interest group (in this case, men). As Connell (Ibid.) suggests, this approach 'makes sense' of the key demands of liberal feminism, and constitutes the grounds on which most of the gains of liberal feminism have been made -- such as suffrage, the inclusion of formal gender equality in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and employment equity programs. Significantly, it rests upon an uncritical acceptance of the liberal conception of individual rights, and fails to recognize the underlying logic of identity (difference equals duality) that perpetuates gender polarity. Thus, as Zillah Eisenstein has demonstrated in several recent works

(1981,1984,1988), it belies its own critical potential in uncovering the manner in which the liberal rights discourse necessarily constructs women as 'not-men'.

The Marxist view treats the state as an instrument of class domination, and sees it as entering into the regulation of gender relations as necessary to the reproduction of capitalism. Feminist work on the state which draws on this perspective has therefore concentrated on the state as a capitalist state. State activity regulating gender is tied to the requirements of capitalist production -- maintaining women as a reserve army of labour, ensuring the reproduction of labour power, etc. Theorists such as Varda Burstyn (1985) and Mary McIntosh (1978), for example, analyze "...state activity which supports the relations male dominance specifically in terms of the capitalist accumulation process" (Randall, 1988:11). This perspective tends not only towards reductionism, but accords a unity and purposive instrumental character to the state which it does not deserve. Debates within Marxism on the state (Milliband, 1973; Jessop, 1982; Poulantzas, 1978) have tended to be resolved against 'derivationism' -- the assumption that the state can be derived from 'the capital form' (Pierson, 1984;564).

The radical feminist view of the state is that it is inherently patriarchal. This perspective is represented most prominently by feminist legal theorist Catherine MacKinnon, for

whom state power is male power. MacKinnon turns Marxism "inside out and on its head": "Feminism stands in relation to marxism as marxism does to classical political economy: its final conclusion and ultimate critique" (1981:30). The state, represented by legal 'objectivity', is the institutionalization of the male point of view, of male power. As Valverde and Weir (1988:31) conclude, the class reductionism of Marxism is "...quietly transformed into an equally totalizing gender reductionism" which sees all forms of regulation as "..explainable by reference to male interests".

The post-structuralist view of the state as "...part of a dispersed apparatus of social control working through dominant discourses as well as force" (Connell, 1987:130), not inherently anchored in any particular economic-class or sex-class interest. That is, interests, identity and privilege are constructed anew in particular discursive articulations. Both the work of Foucault and that of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) are illustrative here. Foucault radically de-centres the state, refusing to recognize any unity of power as it appears in particular institutionalized hierarchies such as ~~state~~ forms, or any continuity of privilege across locations. As Eisenstein (1988) suggests, Foucault does not reconnect these dispersions of power "...to the hierarchical system(s) of power(s) represented through the discourses of the state". Laclau and Mouffe's appropriation and development of Gramsci's concept of

hegemony similarly de-centres the state, but in doing so it becomes severed from any anchoring in class (or gender) interests.

The perspective that I wish to briefly sketch out here is one that takes the state as both an empirical and ideological configuration, played out at the level of institutional forms. From the liberal model, I will take the ideology of 'equality' as fundamental to the legitimation of these forms, but suggest, contra liberalism, that beneath the rhetoric of equality lies a potential crisis of legitimation. From the marxian model, I accept that state forms are integral to the economic project of capitalism, but contra marxism, will suggest that the crucial space for analysis is in the 'autonomous' moments of the state. As Aronowitz (1981: 190) puts it, "...it is in the moment of autonomy, rather than the moment of dependence upon corporate capital, that (the state) reveals its sustained power to erect a system of beliefs, myths and symbols that can be successfully integrated into social consciousness". From the radical feminist model, it must be granted that the state <u>is</u> patriarchal -- although <u>not</u> inherently so. Rather it is patriarchal in character as a result of particular historical struggles. Within the institutional configuration of the state, "...patriarchy is both constructed and contested" (Connell, 1987:130). Finally, from post-structuralism, there is no doubt that the state, through certain discourses, is

implicated in concrete processes of regulation, and this perspective introduces an institutional level of analysis which is essential to a de-centred approach to the state. Yet it becomes necessary to reintegrate into this de-centred view the notion of interests (economic, sexual, moral) if we are to find viable ground for a liberatory politics.

In a brilliant article on the difficulties of studying the state, Philip Abrams (1988)[2] suggests the key task in the study of the state is the understanding and exposure of the way in which the state is constructed as an 'illusory general interest' (Marx and Engels,1970:54). Keeping in mind the feminist critique of the historical and philosophical exclusion of women from 'humanity', developed in the previous chapter, the notion of 'illusory general interest' takes on especial significance. As Sue Findlay notes, the state-system must present the impression of a "unity of interests to maintain its legitimacy as the representative of the people, as opposed to the representative of class and gender interests" (cited in Barnsley, 1988:19).

Abrams (1988:80-2) suggests that we need two objects of study -- the state-system, and the state-idea. The state-system is that "palpable nexus of practice and institutional

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[2]This paper was originally a conference presentation given in Britain in 1977, but published posthumously in 1988.

structure centred in government". The state-idea is that "ideological artifact" attributing unity, morality and independence to the disunited, amoral and dependent workings of the practice of government. It is folly, he suggests, to suppose that we also have to study 'the state', as "an entity, agent, function or relation over and above the state-system and state-idea"[3]:

> In sum: the state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is....The ideological function is extended to a point where conservatives and radicals alike believe that their practice is not directed at each other but at the state; the world of illusion prevails (1988:82).

The idea of the state is constructed out of the state-system, in what Jenson (1986;26) has termed the 'universe of political discourse'. The universe of political discourse draws the lines between public and private, and sets the parameters of political action by limiting "...the set of actors accorded the status of legitimate participants; the range of issues considered within the realm of political debate; the policy alternatives considered feasible for implementation; the alliance strategies available for change"

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[3]As means of illustration, he suggests we substitute the word 'god' for the word 'state', drawing an analogy to study of religion: "The task of the sociologist of religion is the explanation of religious practice (churches) and religious belief (theology): he (sic) is not called upon to debate, let alone to believe in, the existence of god" (Abrams, 1988:80).

(Ibid.).

State activity implicated in the regulation of gendered identities is dispersed over a range of institutional sites. Some institutions and policies are explicitly gendered (for example, provisions governing maternity leaves, or grants provided under the auspices of the Secretary of State Women's Program[4]). In most cases, however, it is implicit -- disguised by supposedly gender-neutral categories such as tax-payer, worker, dependent, client, recipient, citizen, consumer, and the ubiquitous 'family'. These are the categories which define the territory of 'civil society' -- the "individualizing sphere of capitalist society" (Urry, 1981).

b. State, Civil Society, Economy

Where to draw the lines between economy, state and civil society is a question of much debate. As Frankel (1987:202) notes, rigid divisions between economy, civil society and state "...are a caricature of the infinitely more complicated social

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[4]Within the Secretary of State Women's Program, there are contradictory trends. On the one hand, funds are given to feminist organizations which enable them to directly contest state activity. On the other hand, only certain forms of feminist advocacy are permitted, the most notable exception being lesbianism (see Ross (1988)). In 1989, funds were given to R.E.A.L. Women for the first time, setting a new and dangerous precedent in the distribution of monies intended to provide resources for community-level activity promoting women's equality. Also, as a result of the 1989 federal budget, money to 'core-funded' groups such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women was substantially cut back.

interactions of everyday life":

> In most leading capitalist societies, millions of workers are employed in state institutions which are an inseparable part of 'the economy'. Also, the so-called cultural institutions of 'civil society' such as the media, education, theatre, etc. are integral parts of many national and local state structures.

Perhaps more accurately, we might characterize the state/ civil society/ economy configuration as a set of interlocking circles, the actual extent of their overlap a matter of historical specification. Following Gramsci (1971:208), we can conceive of civil society as standing between "...the economic structure and the State with its legislation and its coercion".[5] As Morrow (1987;6) notes, Gramsci's distinction between civil society and state is quite 'fluid'-- "As a consequence, the more important distinction is between two forms of control (hegemony vs. coercive domination) rather than the state and civil society". Hegemony, as Gramsci (1971;12) defines it, is the "...'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group". Importantly for our purposes, civil society contains the 'social' -- the "...site of discourse about people's needs, specifically about

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[5]The state, however, does not have a monopoly on the legitimate use of force or violence. Historically, male violence against women and children has been viewed as quite legitimate. Even today, light penalties for rape, and what is euphemistically called 'family violence', and the persistence of blaming the victims of such violence, indicates a continuing tacit acceptance of its legitimacy.

those needs which have broken out of the domestic and or official economic spheres that earlier contained them as 'private matters'" (Fraser, 1987b:116). It is the interpretation of these needs that comprises the terrain of political discourse, and the construction of hegemony.

Civil society is particularly important in legitimation processes in advanced capitalism. That is, the capitalist, patriarchal state has to hide that it is a capitalist, patriarchal state. It does so by appealing to civil society as its base and justification -- 'civil society' being constructed on the principles of civil rights, citizenship, justice, equality, liberty, and democracy. Yet as the historian Edward Hallett Carr reminds us, abstractions like liberty, equality and justice are like the printed words on a blank cheque. They are "...valueless until we fill in the other part, which states how much liberty we propose to allocate to whom, who we recognize as our equals and up to what amount. The way we fill in the cheque from time to time is a matter of history" (cited in Kessler-Harris, 1988:243-4). Filling in the cheque is the essence of legitimation-work.

c. Legitimation

Legitimacy is a key issue in any discussion of modernity. As Connolly (1984:2) observes, the question of legitimacy "...could be posed within the framework of medieval society, but compared to modernity, the space provided was

cramped and confined". As reason and human will eclipse less secular justifications for social order, the question of legitimacy asks what can "...render the conventions governing us valid by making them fully expressive of our will" (Ibid.;4). More accurately, we are interested in what makes them appear to be fully expressive of "our will" (the "illusory general interest"). As Abrams (1988;77) stresses:

> Not to see the state as in the first instance an exercise in legitimation, in moral regulation, is, in the light of such connections, surely to participate in the mystification which is the vital point of the construction of the state. And in our sort of society...mystification is the central mode of subjection....The state is, then, in every sense of the term a triumph of concealment. It conceals the real history and relations of subjection behind an ahistorical mask of legitimating illusion....

An increased need for legitimation peculiar to advanced capitalism is embodied in what Habermas calls the "recoupling" of the economic system to the political, and the extent of administrative penetration into the 'lifeworld'. As Habermas (1976) suggests, crisis in advanced capitalist society is displaced from the economic to the political. Thus, we can speak, as Cloward and Piven do, of the "moral economy of the welfare state" -- that is, the politicization of economic issues:

> The market, with its mysterious and autonomous laws, has receded. In its place there are political leaders who are causing things to be the way they are (Cloward and Piven, 1981:230).

As previously 'private' arrangements (eg. education of

children, care of the elderly, family property) become objects of state policy, the question of legitimacy "...now encompasses an enlarged ensemble of social relations" (Connolly, 1984: 236).

Habermas sees the expansion of the state as symptomatic of the displacement of crises from the economic to the political. Seeing three distinct sub-systems as possible origins of crises, and their manifestations as either system crises (a crisis in the system itself) or identity crises (a crisis in the identity of the system as perceived by its members), four possible crisis tendencies arise (Held,1980:287):

Point of origin (sub-system)	System crisis	Identity crisis
economic	economic crisis	
political	rationality crisis	legitimation crisis
socio-cultural		motivation crisis

Habermas explicitly rejects an orthodox base/super-structure model which would hold that political crisis could be 'read off' from economic crisis. As he summarizes it:

> Systems are not presented as subjects...only subjects can be involved in crises. Thus, only when members of a society experience structural alterations as critical for continued existence and feel their social identity threatened can we speak of crises. Disturbances of system integration endanger continued existence only to the extent that social integration is at stake... (Habermas,

1976:3).

Habermas adds an important dimension to the concept of crisis by his insistence on a subjective component. This conception cedes a more complex role to culture than an orthodox base/superstructure interpretation, which would link economic disturbance and political consequences more directly. Habermas maintains that cultural norms and values play an important role in the creation or avoidance of a crisis. As Morrow (1988;23) suggests, in doing so Habermas makes an important contribution to drawing out the political implications of a critical social psychology, suggesting that "transformations of individual identity become necessary conditions of epochal (evolutionary) transitions". Another line of analysis may follow from this insight -- the challenge of social movements, such as feminism, to challenge the 'philosophy of identity'. As will be discussed below, this is a tack Habermas has not pursued, which makes his concep-tualization of 'new' social movements problematic.

d. 'New' Social Movements?

The increased significance of civil society in the legitimation problems of advanced capitalism is particularly evident in recent work on what have come to be called 'new social movements'.[4] Once again, theory catches up to reality,

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[4]As West notes, most of the movements included here are "... historically 'new' only to ostrichlike logocentric (continued...)

recognizing that "...the major social conflicts and political struggles that took place in America and Western Europe during the 1960's did not take place within the exchange relationships between labour and capital" (Offe, 1984:127). Broadly referring to social movements originating outside the realm of production proper, Habermas characterizes the 'new social movements' as concerned not so much with the relations of distribution, but with "the grammar of forms of life" (1981;33). That is, class is not the determinant of the collective identities represented by these movements. But they are also about distribution -- not just the distribution of economic benefits, but about the distribution of power and of individuality as the basis of claims to equality. Thus, a key feature of new social movements is the contestation of identities -- that is, identities created by the administrative state are grasped as sites for resistance. Perhaps the clearest example of this, as a number of recent works demonstrate (see for example, Kinsman, 1987; Weeks, 1985), is the identity of 'homosexual'. Feminism is also paradigmatic here. As will be demonstrated below, the identity of 'working mother', which only emerged out of certain regulatory

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[6](...continued)
Marxists whose sight has been confined to the workplace (1988:25). This is particularly true of feminism, which has a long history both within and outside of the socialist and labour movements (See for example, Taylor,1983; Sangster,1989).

practices, has become a key site of identity politics. In the field of identity politics, "...one's identity is taken (and defined) as a political point of departure, as motivation for action, and as a delineation of one's politics" (Alcoff, 1988;431-2).

In general, the 'new social movements' are characterized by a strategy which seeks to repoliticize the institutions of civil society, to redraw the boundaries between public and private, to challenge prevailing rules of normality and, importantly, to imagine new individual-society relationships. As Cohen suggests, "...they target the social domain of 'civil society'... raising issues concerned with the democratization of structures of everyday life and focusing on forms of communication and collective identity" (1985: 667).

It is the tension between the basis of feminism as speaking for an 'ascriptive collectivity' and the liberal democratic framework of individual rights that produces the crisis potential in institutional reform. Reading in the 'gender subtext' to state-institutional forms and social policy reveals the logic of identity which underlies them, and makes such sacred categories as 'citizenship' problematic. The democratic element of citizenship rests upon some theory of formal justice, an ethic of rights and responsibilities. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the conception of the universal subject that underlies such a theory both theoretically and

practically excludes women, non-whites, homosexuals, the poor -- all the bearers of particularities -- from the universalistic public (Young,1987). When collectivities seek to act on the basis of particularities (sexual orientation, gender, language, ethnicity, etc.), that is to seek collective rights, they run head on into the logic of universality and individualism that refuses to admit particularities into the discourse of 'equality'.[7]

A feminist deconstruction of the logic of universality casts doubt on some of Habermas's assumptions about the social movements and social change. The 'cultural content' of society, or its normative structures supposedly follow a developmental logic which moves from the concrete and particular to the abstract and general. As Lawrence (1989:151-2) summarizes it:

> Historically, normative structures which were based on substantive ethics -- as in feudalism -- could engender legal norms which gave privileges and rights to certain strata, but denied them to others. However, such structures depend for their validity on world views which presuppose either divine revelation or objective values....(T)he mode of economic activity characteristic of capitalism necessitated a universalist justification because the state proclaimed the free-market system as a self-legitimating agency of equal opportunity.
>
> Habermas assumes that the 'moral self-development' of the

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[7]There is, of course, the accepted representation of certain particularities as universals. When Brian Mulroney campaigns with Mila and the children at his side, there are no accusations of him "flaunting his heterosexuality".

individual mirrors the historical evolution of the normative structures of social systems, and that social movements reflect a collective learning process which 'undermine strong attachments to collective identities based on traditional world views' (Morrow, 1989;30). This is problematic for feminism.

Habermas locates the radical potential of feminism in relation to other social movements, in the lack of a 'status quo ante' which is desirable, and concludes that for this reason that "...the women's movement contains 'a priori' a critical potential" (1986:61). Yet Habermas's conceptualization of 'new social movements' as emerging at the 'seam of system and lifeworld', and their emancipatory potential as lying in the extent to which they advance a 'decolonization' of the life-world, is inadequate for a feminist analysis.

Fraser (1987a) both critiques and extends Habermas' analysis. Where Habermas delineates the roles of worker and consumer as linking the family to the economy (with money as the 'medium of exchange') and the roles of citizen and client as linking it to the public sphere and the state (with power as the 'medium of exchange'), he fails to see that these are inherently gendered roles. Thus, the concepts of worker, consumer and wage are "gender-economic concepts", as is citizenship a "gender-political" concept. By failing to see this 'gender subtext', Habermas fails to theorize some crucial

issues. Thus:

> ...his programmatic conception of decolonization bypasses key feminist questions; it fails to address the issue of how to restructure the relation of childrearing to paid work and citizenship....In short, the struggles and wishes of contemporary women are not adequately clarified by a theory that draws the basic battleline between system and lifeworld institutions. From a feminist perspective, there is a more basic battle line between the forms of male dominance linking "system" to "lifeworld" and us (Fraser, 1987:55).

It is first necessary, then, to read in this 'subtext' by outlining political discourse on the construction and regulation of gendered subjects.

e. Regulating Gender

As Jenson (1986;9-10) notes, "Everyday observations of the law, welfare programmes, educational institutions, and family policy indicates that state actions affect the ways in which feminine and masculine lives are constructed". Yet while such observation suggests that the state activity does contribute to the constitution of the categories of the gender order, "observation of such effects does not constitute and explanation of why they exist". I believe that such an explanation is best sought, not with abstract reference to the 'needs of capital' or the 'interests of patriarchy', but in an examination of specific practices through which the parameters for gendered identities are both constructed and become political points of departure (Alcoff, 1988:433). As Corrigan (1981:329) reminds us: "We live in worlds which are as much

moral as material, indeed there is no way of appropriating and handling the material which does not involve forms of expression some of which carry a higher evaluation than others (sic)". Just as the creation of 'moral subjects' was (is) essential to state formation (Corrigan and Sayer,1985; Valverde and Weir,1988), so is the creation of those subjects as properly gendered. Nowhere does this become clearer than in examining the romance of 'the family' in political discourse.

5.3 The "War Over the Family"

There is no getting around the family as absolutely crucial to feminist struggle. As Morgan (1985:254) notes, it is "...the point to which, however labyrinthine, the paths always return":

> ...the family is both societal and individual, both institutional and personal, both public and private...the very terms which are used in the analysis -- family, marriage, parenthood -- themselves have a history, a socially constructed character and...terms such as mother and father, husband and wife are both at one and the same time institutional and individual (Ibid.:285-6).

This is not to suggest, as I have criticized much feminist theory for doing, that we should pick out one institution -- the family -- as the 'bearer' of gender, leaving the rest untheorized. Nor will I suggest that there is 'a' family about which we can speak.[8] Yet 'families' and the

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[8]We might try Abram's analogy to studying religion here as well, substituting 'god' for 'the family'.

ideology of familialism' are absolutely central to women's history and the regulation of gender.

Brigette and Peter Berger (1983) have recently produced a sociological defence of the bourgeois family which ties together the psychological, economic and political implications of familial ideology. Their argument is built upon the assumption that maternal nurturance is essential to the development of autonomous (read male) individuals, asserting that "the family, and specifically the bourgeois family, is the necessary social context for the emergence of the autonomous individuals who are the empirical foundation of political democracy" (1983:186). They conclude that when "...family obligations come to be perceived as obstacles to self-realization in (women's) careers, individual women will have to decide on their priorities. Our own hope is that many will come to understand that life is more than a career and that this 'more' is above all to be found in the family. But, however individual women decide, they should not expect public policy to underwrite and subsidize their life plans" (1983:205). In other words, the very foundation of democracy rests upon the devotion of women to the nurturance of children,

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'As Luxton (1987;238) summarizes it, "the family" exists in two distinct, but interrelated forms: as "'familialism'...a widespread and deeply embedded ideology about how people ought to live" and as "...economic and social groups which in fact organize domestic and personal life".

and to encourage them to pursue other interests (for example, by providing public funds for daycare centres) is counter to the 'greater good'. This is not a new argument -- it is a restatement, albeit in sophisticated academic terms, of the essential gender polarity which has prompted the regulation of procreation and the drive to produce a moral citizenry which has characterized most policy intervention into 'the family' (read women). Yet as Kessler-Harris (1988:248-249) comments, it is an argument, which like much social policy, "invents a history" which ignores both the diversity of women's experiences and the struggles over their regulation.

a. Constructing Citizens: State Interest in Procreation

Procreation is inevitably a political activity. At the most basic level, it is through the bearing of children that society is kept alive. But the rearing of those children is equally important -- as Vickers (1987:485) notes:

> Nationalism, tribalism, ethnicity and most religions work through the reproductive mode. Our mother tongue and what we learn at our mother's knee shape to a considerable degree what identity we will adopt, what group we will be loyal to and what authority figures we will accept as legitimate.

It is no surprise, then, that the state has an interest in this most gendered of activities.

Consistent with the approach outlined above, it is necessary to dispense with the assumption that we can start with a 'state' which acts on the 'family' from above in a

straightforward and unproblematic manner (Riley, 1983:190), according to some pre-determined interest. The last century in Canada has been characterized by what Foucault terms a 'bio-politics of the population', a concern with the species body -- "...the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity" (Foucault, 1978:139). To be sure, the requirements of a capitalist economy for a supply of relatively healthy labourers influenced this discourse, but it cannot be reduced to this. Population politics in most Western nations, as Matthews (1984:75) suggests, have been characterized by a range of 'overlapping and shifting' interests -- religious, scientific, class-political, race-political and gender-political. Thus, both state and non-state groups and agencies engaged in debate around 'population ideology', which, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, generally held that "a large, healthy and 'racially pure' population was central to moral and economic progress" (Ibid.:74). As Matthews concludes, the central focus of population politics was women's bodies: "...its principle mode of control was women's work within their families; its central icon was the Ideal Mother" (Ibid.:75).

While the construction of population ideology in Canada, as in most Western nations, was dispersed over a range of sites (for example, immigration, education, public health and welfare

policies, medicine), the 'Ideal Mother', as the bearer and rearer of a moral citizenry was at the centre of debate. Contrary to certain feminist assumptions that men have always unilaterally controlled women's fertility, women in Canada were (and are) active in promoting the regulation of the population via women's child-bearing and rearing tasks. While the early feminist movement in Canada was by no means homogenous in ideology,[10] what may be viewed as key victories for women -- from suffrage to labour market and welfare reform -- were fought and won by women on the grounds of woman's essential and 'morally superior' role as mother.

A key strand of debate involved fertility itself, and this crystallized around the arguments for and against contraception. As McLaren and McLaren (1986:141) note; "...in the politics of contraception, the class interests were never absent....Women spoke, in general, on behalf of class rather than gender issues in Canada". Thus, the first calls for effective contraception came from women involved primarily in class-politics (socialist and labour groups) rather than those involved in gender-politics (dominated by maternal feminists). The Women's Labour League, originating out of the Communist Party of Canada in the early 1920's, took up contraception as a

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[10]Notably, Flora MacDonald Denison and Alice Chown suggest a more radical tradition than the reform-oriented 'maternal feminism' which had the most impact in Canada (Kealey, 1979).

major issue, lobbying for the establishment of 'mother's clinics' to distribute birth control to women (Sangster, 1989:38-41). The left perspective on birth control, however, was "...always carefully placed within a class analysis...which stressed the right of the working-class family to make their own decisions about family size, and working-class wives' need for relief from the physical burdens of constant childbearing" (Ibid.:39-40). On the right, birth control was advocated by those who endorsed the increasingly popular eugenics arguments of the 1920's and 1930's, which stressed 'good breeding' and control of fertility among the 'unfit' (Prentice et. al., 1988:258), and by those, like A.R. Kaufman, who argued that "only a reduction in the birth rate could stave off social disorder" (McLaren and McLaren, 1986:71).[11]

Early feminists in Canada were slow to embrace the cause of contraception, fearing that it was another "means of facilitating male licentiousness" (Bacchi, 1983:116) or that it

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[11]A wealthy manufacturer, Kaufman embraced the cause of birth control as the only means by which the economic order (capitalism) could be maintained. As he put it in a letter to the Alberta Department of Public Health in 1937: "The writer feels that Canada must choose between birth control and revolution, as some day the funds for relief and the various social services may be lacking and needy people will likely fight and steal before they starve" (McLaren and McLaren, 1986:71). Dorothea Palmer, employed by Kaufman, was acquitted in 1937 on charges of distributing birth control information on the basis of a defense which stressed the 'public good' of providing contraceptive information to working-class French Canadian families, many of whom were on relief (Prentice et. al., 1988;258).

threatened to devaluate motherhood as woman's true calling. Leading Canadian women's organizations eventually defended birth control only "...when their moral misgivings were overwhelmed by evidence of the social and economic misery resulting from unwanted pregnancies" (McLaren and McLaren, 1986:70). In general then, fertility control was debated not on the grounds of women's autonomy, or their right to control their own bodies, but within the broader questions of social order and the advancement of the nation. As McLaren and McLaren summarize it: "Birth control ideology was embraced by the middle classes once they understood how it could be turned to the control of the reproduction of the lower orders rather than to their liberation" (Ibid.:123). The 'official' discourse on fertility control never stopped women of all classes from seeking to control their own fertility -- often successfully, if the steadily declining birthrate in Canada throughout the 19th and 20th century is any indication. In spite of the fact that contraception (and abortion) remained technically illegal in Canada until the late 1960's, family planning became widely discussed, scientifically developed and practised. Thus, while women were 'regulated' by official policy on population, it was far from a simple matter of state <u>control</u>. What was at stake was how 'public' to make a previously 'private' matter (McLaren and McLaren, 1986;139). A range of interests -- from 'social purity' to anti-Catholicism

to concerns for the stability of the economic order -- entered into the fertility debates. As Valverde and Weir (1988:33) point out, regulation is rarely direct or the embodiment of a single interest or meaning, demonstrating "...the need to transcend explanations of women's oppression that rely either on the single category of 'male interests', or on the assumption of a cohesive set of 'norms'".

The debates around fertility did not, however, question one fundamental assumption -- that when children were born, it fell upon the mother to ensure their good health and character. As noted in Chapter 3, early labour legislation affecting women in Canada was conceived and implemented on the basis that working women were either mothers or potential mothers, and thus was aimed at ensuring that their health and morality was be protected to ensure that of future generations. Thus, the state objectives of the first minimum wage laws included that of protecting "...the health, morals and efficiency of that large class of women dependent on their daily wage for a living" (cited in Prentice et. al., 1988:227). The growing middle-class social reform movement of the early 20th century, largely spearheaded by women,[12] invested women's role as mothers with increasing importance. Again, there was no unity of interests. As Trofimenkoff (1986: 123) notes for

[12]See Kealey (ed.), 1979.

Quebec in the early 1900's:[13]

> Feminists, nationalists and clerics all went about their self-imposed task of protecting the family from urban ills with varying methods and prescriptions, sometimes in co-operation and sometimes in conflict with each other.

This mix of interests and strategies, but all focussing on women as mothers, has remained a key theme in both state and non-state discourse on women throughout the 20th century, in spite of great changes in the actual lived experience of women.

b. The Creation of the 'Working Mother'

Decreasing birth rates and increasing labour market participation among women did little to change their positioning in political discourse as 'mothers'. Even the effects of World War II, widely hailed as a watershed for Canadian women, did not significantly resolve the opposition between 'worker' and 'mother'. Women were essential to the war effort -- as military personnel, civilian industrial workers, agricultural workers, volunteers and careful consumers. The Women's Selective Service Agency was created to identify, recruit and allocate female labour -- targeting first young single women, then childless married women, and finally (as somewhat of a last resort) married women with children

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[13]Nationalism and feminism continue to have an uneasy relationship in Quebec, particulary with respect to the nationalist concern over declining birthrates. See Lamoureux (1987).

(Prentice et. al., 1988:297-8). While patriotism was the basis of recruitment campaigns, research suggests that economic factors were more of a motivation for the entry of women as workers into the war economy (Pierson, 1986:71-2). Just emerging from the Depression, women were eager to improve the standard of living for themselves and their families, and the wages in war industries were high compared to more traditional areas of employment, such as domestic service or the textile industries. Relaxation of statutes governing the permissible hours of work for women, or allowable areas of employment, occurred in several provinces. Day nurseries began to open as the country became more dependent on the paid labour of women with young children. The Income Tax Act, which allowed married women to earn only $750 per year before their husbands lost the married deduction, was amended in 1942 to allow working wives to retain full dependent status irrespective of their earnings (Prentice et. al., 1988:298). To summarize, women responded to the opportunities available and governments responded to the need for their labour. But they were not, even after all of this, workers -- they were <u>women</u> workers. Hence the post-war retrenchment -- day nurseries lost their funding, the marriage bar dropped back into place in the civil service, family allowances were introduced and the Income Tax Act was amended again, this time <u>lowering</u> the maximum earnings for the married deduction to $250. As Pierson (1983:26-7) summarizes it,

"...the sexual division of labour reemerged stronger than ever" and "...the dominant message was that women's chief function was to bear and rear the next generation".

Although women's labour market participation rates never dropped to their pre-war levels, the post-war period witnessed a retrenchment of the maternal ideal. Again, this was by no means an unproblematic imposition of the will of the state on Canadian women -- while state policy certainly encouraged women to move from the workplace back to the home, the maternal ideal was also constructed through the economy, which promoted domestic consumption, and through academia and the media, which popularized theories such as Bowlby's 'maternal deprivation' thesis (Riley, 1983) and constructed the 'working mother' as a social problem. The very term 'working mother' brought together two formerly disparate identities (worker, mother) -- never disparate in material reality, but disparate in the dominant ideological discourse, including that of the social sciences. Eventually, as the economy increasingly depended on the availability of women's labour -- it became a new, permissible (though somewhat problematic) subject-position, specifically feminine. It remains a key site of contestation in political discourse around gender.

c.The War over the Family Revisited: Feminism versus Anti-Feminism

The current 'war over the family', as always, is related to both the bearing and rearing of children, and, as always, women's bodies and women's labour are at the centre of debate. At stake is the interpretation of needs and the regulation of identities within a debate over where to draw the lines between 'public' and 'private'.

The regulatory strategy which figures prominently in the management of gendered identities is the setting of boundaries between 'public' and 'private'. An historically informed approach must recognize that there are no simple boundaries between public and private, between economy, family, state, etc. These boundaries are shifting mechanisms of control -- of the exclusion of particularities. While feminism seeks to expose the contradictory logics of individualism and relatedness that these boundaries mediate, and to historicize, politicize and contest the sedimented appearance of these boundaries, the 'new right'[14] takes the contrary tack: they seek

[14]What is 'new' about the 'new' right? In contrast to a past conservatism which appealed to traditional hierarchies based on 'natural' differences (although this strain is still found in religiously based factions of the right), the dominant philosophical basis of the influential right in Canada (and that of Thatcherism and Reaganism) is that of the universalism of the market, reinterpreted in light of current conditions. As Lawrence (1989:150) suggests:

> "...in objective terms, possessive individualism and the achievement principle are increasingly meaningless in the context of advanced capitalism.

(continued...)

to de-historicize, de-politicize and prevent the contestation of these boundaries. Yet in doing so, they neatly expose the contradictions they wish to conceal. The slogan of Canada's main anti-feminist group, R.E.A.L. Women, is "Women's rights, but not at the expense of human rights". Thus, we have an explicit juxtaposition between 'women' and 'humans'. It is only humans who are entitled to full 'equality', and this illustrates gender polarity very nicely. When women seek to take advantage of the supposed universality of 'equal rights', they are "trying to be like men" -- humans are really men!! More specifically, humans are heterosexual men and their dependents, including foetuses. These are the deserving recipients of "human rights". Thus, there is a selective and inconsistent use of the liberal rhetoric of equality. Further, they have adopted the rhetoric (but not the substance) of the

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[14](...continued)

> The former seems a nonsense in the wake of the concentration of economic resources in fewer and fewer hands. Yet as society becomes more collectivised and dominated by larger and larger institutions we are asked again to subscribe to an individualist philosophy and to believe in the intrinsic 'goodness' of the market".

They can thus appeal to 'giving people back their freedom' (such as the Saskatchewan government's calling their privatization agenda "public participation"). Combined with the increasingly anonymous character of control in advanced capitalism, a protest potential is created "...which only the Right can use advantageously. Thus political leaders who skilfully reveal their own distaste for bureaucracy and large corporations and who touch citizens with homely aphorisms about the family, religion and morality can feed off a fear of institutions which actually underpin their power" (Ibid.)

feminist movement (Eichler, 1986:1). Women exist as mothers who are either "forced to go out to work" or "choose to stay home":

> We believe that the ideal situation, even in a changing world, is that every family, who so chooses, should be able to look after children in their own home. This means that women should have a genuine choice, financially and socially, to remain at home as full time mothers, if they so choose, especially when their children are young (AFWUF, n.d.;2 -- my emphasis)

> Women must have options as to career choices. Today, many women do not have such a choice, but because of economic necessity, are obliged to seek employment in the paid workforce. This option causes strain on today's family. As a result, women and families pay a heavy price, with women carrying multiple responsibilities in their roles of homemaker, parent and breadwinner. This can lead to a strain on marriages, children, and on women themselves, who live on the edge of exhaustion (R.E.A.L. Women, 1985;4)

Demands are made on the state to simultaneously respect the 'privacy' of the family unit (for example, by giving parents the sole right to teach sex education) and to intervene by protecting the patriarchal family (for example, by legislating a 'family wage').[15] In other words, the state is being called

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[15]Eichler (1986:22) cites Phyllis Schlafly, one of the key spokespersons (although I'm sure she would oppose the gender neutral term!) of the New Right as demanding:

"The right of employers to give job preference (where qualifications are equal) to a wage earner supporting dependents"

"The right of a woman to be a full-time wife and mother and to have this right recognized by laws that obligate her husband to provide the primary financial support and a home for her and their children"

(continued...)

upon to protect the gendered division of labour as essential to the protection of a private sphere. Their strategy, like that of neoconservative movements more generally, is to "...restore the nonpolitical, noncontingent and uncontestable foundations of civil society (such as property, the market, the work ethic, the family...)" (Offe, 1985:820).

It is the mystification of gender polarity via the invocation of 'equality' that has real implications for feminist theory and practice. The rhetoric of the 'New Right' is illuminating in its interpretation of the relationship between the public and the private (here, the state and the family), the conflation of this with the sexual division of labour, and the potential for a legitimation crisis in the state as regulator of the gender order. For the anti-feminist right, the family "...should be recognized as the basic unit of society, existing prior to the state with rights that the state must respect" (AFWUF, n.d.:1). We cannot, however, confuse their demands for family privacy with the call for a general protection of privacy in personal life, for at the same time the state is being urged to withdraw from intervention in the 'family', it is being called on to increase its surveillance of

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[15](...continued)

"The right to defend the institution of the family by according certain rights to husbands and wives that are not given to those choosing immoral lifestyles"

'other' populations (gays, the poor, etc.). The 'family' here is specifically the white male-headed family, and this is what feminism[16] poses such a threat to. As one woman surveyed by the Alberta government summarizes it: "It (the women's movement) has denigrated the role of the housewife, deprived men of their enormously strong instinctive need to provide for and protect their families. This in turn has led to males losing respect for females in a traditional role, and has made them expect that women should work, otherwise they are not pulling their weight" (Government of Alberta,1989:6). Feminists "...have successfully argued that 'mothers must work' and that the government 'should' facilitate that lifestyle by providing child-care facilities" (R.E.A.L. Women, 1985;4). Thus, anti-feminism operates in a space opened by feminism ("the personal is the political") and has fashioned an agenda which purports to address the <u>real</u> needs of women in a way that feminism has not.[17]

As Campbell (1987:151-2) notes for Britain, and might

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[16]Feminism and the 'promotion of homosexuality' are usually conflated in the anti-feminist literature. At the 1988 AFWUF conference, a (male) speaker brought in from the U.S. asked all the men to stand up and pray with him to ask God's help in protecting their women from the "godless, communist, lesbian sodomites". As Eichler (1986:17) suggests, their abhorrence of homosexuality is no doubt rooted in its representation of "non-marital, non-procreative sexuality in its purest form".

[17]They are ignoring of course, that needs are historically created.

similarly be said of Canada, "Conservative ideology is increasingly concerned with the idea of the family rather than the work of motherhood". The family becomes central in the defense of the individual -- against the state, and in particular against what is perceived as the creeping socialism of the welfare state. Thus, the 'family' has been deployed as the necessary precondition for authority, private property, morality, etc. The family becomes one half of a range of oppositions: the family versus drug abuse, the family versus homosexuality, the family versus the state, the family versus feminism. For the New Right, the 'family' is above history (Campbell, 1987:ch.7). But above all, the woman as mother is the cornerstone of the 'family'. The feminism/anti-feminism debates are at their root debates over gendered identities.

5.4 Policy as Interpretation and Regulation

Social identities, as they are constructed on the exclusion of certain particularities from the universal public sphere of 'rights', are integral to public policy. Nancy Fraser (1987b) provides an illustrative case in her analysis of U.S. social welfare policies. While such programs as Unemployment Insurance and Social Assistance are presumably constructed on a gender-neutral model of individual rights, a feminist reading finds a two-tiered system. On the one hand, there are programs geared to individuals, usually tied to participation in the labour force (such as Unemployment

Insurance), and for whom the majority of beneficiaries are male. Benefits in these programs are generally based upon straight entitlement criteria -- such as number of weeks worked.[18] On the other hand, there are programs geared to households, such as welfare, "...designed to compensate for family failures, generally the absence of a male breadwinner" (Fraser, 1987b: 108). The majority of beneficiaries of these programs are female. Female beneficiaries of distributive policies are positioned not as rights-bearing citizens, but as needy 'clients'. They are subject to more surveillance and therapeutic intervention. Distribution occurs from an individualized public (tax-payers) to a relationally-defined set of consumers. As Connell (1987:132) suggests, women are more generally constructed as 'consumers' of state services as someone's mother, wife, ex-wife, widow, etc. Thus, they are deviations from the ideal of the autonomous 'citizen', revealing the pervasive masculinity of that seemingly neutral being. Men are individuals, women are related to individuals.

The gender polarity of dependence versus autonomy reverberates throughout public policy, and is explicitly

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[18]Yet even in 'individualized' income support programs, such as Unemployment Insurance, an element of 'family policy' is never absent. For example, while not part of any explicit policy, in Canada the "maximum unemployment benefit level in combination with family allowances approximates some estimates of a poverty-line income for a family of four" (Armitage, cited in McDaniel,1989:5).

entrenched in the current political agenda of encouraging (in the public realm) increased individual self-reliance and relegation of caring to the private, to be done, not surprisingly by women. Some recent documents from the Alberta government provide a convenient example. In Caring and Responsibility: A Statement of Social Policy for Alberta, the government identifies its role as providing "...support and resources to create an environment in which Albertans can work together, be self-reliant, and take responsibility for their own lives, their families, and their communities".[19] It is the apparent gender neutrality of 'Albertans and their families' that masks the gender inequality. As Jessica Benjamin (1988:201) notes:

> ...the moment women take advantage of the logic of universality... the advocates of autonomy trot out the hidden gender clause. The unspoken assumption is that women, by upholding the private sphere and creating a nurturing environment, create the framework for the autonomous individuality of men.

In the related document Person to Person: An Alberta Dialogue on Economic Equity for Women the government indeed trots out this gender clause. There, it is stated that: "For a variety of reasons, most Alberta women now work outside the home. They also retain, and according to Dialogue participants want to retain, their role as primary caregivers in the home. New

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[19]Benjamin (1988:202-3) suggests that the split between public individualism and private nurturance is at the root of our society's wide-spread disdain for the publicly dependent.

policies and programs will continue to take this dual role into account". The duality of 'caring' and 'responsibility' is manifested as 'women' and 'men'. As Randall (1988:15) summarizes the debates around child-care in Canada: "That the state is seen to be alleviating the double demands of so-called 'working mothers' in no way challenges the traditional view that children are women's, but not men's responsibilities".

Thus, gender polarity is, in the sense that Jenson (1989) uses the term, a 'hegemonic paradigm': "...a set of interconnected premises which make sense of, or give meaning to, many social relations....(I)t constitutes a kind of explanation of the world at the level of common sense as well as in formal theory". Within this paradigm, "...acceptable forms and images of social activity and individual and collective identities" (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985:4) are defined. Clearly, policies becomes 'institutionalized patterns of interpretations' (Fraser, 1987b:105). At the same time, they obscure their normative assumptions and the gender polarity of autonomy and nurturance which constitute them. Thus, a "particular moral order" is presented as description (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985:6), suppressing alternative interpretations and giving the illusion that this is the only permissable interpretation.

5.5 Conclusions: The Limits of Equality

After years of fighting for, and often winning, various forms of policy reforms, growing numbers of feminists are becoming increasingly aware of the limits of institutional reform.[20] In the wake of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, political issues are transformed into matters of judicial review. In the cases brought to court under the Charter in the last few years, it is men in the majority who are arguing discrimination "...to their advantage, often to women's detriment" (Buist,1988;103). The limits of institutional reform and the 'limits of equality' are no doubt related. In spite of formal equality for women being entrenched in the Charter, in spite of the vast array of political gains made in response to feminist demands, there is a persistent sexual asymmetry left untouched. This asymmetry manifests as that familiar polarity of male/female, masculine/feminine, autonomy/dependency, individuality/relatedness. It is the mystification of gender polarity via the invocation of 'equality' that has real implications for feminist theory and practice. It has only been by coming up against the limits of reform in the name of 'equality' that feminism has become conscious of the underlying gender polarity which is mystified

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[20]For discussion of specific issues, see the special issue of Resources for Feminist Research (V.17, no.3, September, 1988) on "Feminist Perspectives on the Canadian State".

by it. As long as institutional forms are premised upon administratively defined identities, on a unitary conception of 'citizenship' which belies the underlying gender polarity, they will contribute to the regulation of identities so defined. On the other hand, as feminist scholarship gradually reveals the historicity of these identities and thus exposes the limits of institutional reform, the seeds of real change might be sown. When the limits of institutional reform are realized, it becomes increasingly apparent that "equality" itself has limits.

It has always been real social changes that have presented the issues with which theory must grapple -- which make problematic previous accounts of social life, by exposing their lacunae and contradictions. Women's struggle for autonomy, continually thwarted by the opposition of femininity and individuality, presents such a challenge in demanding a fundamental reconsideration of the relationship between individual and society. Again, it demands a careful examination of " the ways in which a specific public-private distinction came to be gendered", rather than making generalizations "...about women's confinement to privacy" (Valverde and Weir, 1988).

Feminism, at its best, is a project of redefinition of the relationship between individual and society, seeking, in Kathy Ferguson's words "...an integration of the individual and

the collective in an ongoing process of authentic individualism and genuine connectedness" (1984:157). This entails recognition that "...any radical reconstruction of either private life or public life entails a reconstruction of the relationship between them, since they are in part defined by each other" (Ibid:201). The task for feminism, then, is to reject prevailing modes of interpretation and undertake the inherently normative project of creating alternative interpretations. In uncovering the suppressed history of women, we are only now reaching an understanding of how any mode of interpretation is the result of contestation and resistance, and how other possible interpretations have been suppressed.

An analysis of the contradictions in both New Right and liberal rhetoric points to the need to develop a normative foundation for feminism. As Cohen (1983:101) suggests:

> ...the question becomes: which traditions, which family form, which community, which solidarities are to be defended.

This remains an important question for feminism if we are to avoid both relativism and dogmatism in charting a political agenda.

The need for a normative foundation for feminism has never been more urgent. As the opposition confidently points to Christian fundamentalism or laissez-faire conservatism, cloaked in terms of 'individual rights', as its justification, feminist theory has grappled with questions of difference and

choice. As was pointed out a decade ago:

> In its uncertainty, feminism at this moment hedges with a philosophy of individual choices: let there be rights; let there be choices; let there be no right or wrong way for all women....As neo-romanticist ideology gains ground, fuelled by the subjective crisis in women's lives, feminism seems to become ever more determined about its undeterminedness, more nervously defensive of "choice" for its own sake, less and less prone to pass judgement on the alternatives, or to ask how these came to be choices in the first place. (Ehrenreich and English, 1978;291 -- my emphasis)

It is only now, as we begin to strip away the layers of fiction that have obscured the 'gender sub-text' of every aspect of psyche and society, and that have presented domination as difference, that we can embark this project.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION....A POINT OF DEPARTURE

> It is undeniable that the more we know of a particular form, practice, institution or period the less likely we are to be satisfied with any general analysis of it, however close (Williams, 1981:181).

Williams' comment seems a particularly apt summary of the project I have undertaken, and suggests a turn to a more open, historically specific approach to the production and reproduction of women's subordination. I will first recap the key points of my argument, and then briefly outline what it might contribute to a more adequate point of departure for socialist-feminist theory.

In the first chapter, I traced the shifts and turns in the "reproduction problematic" as socialist and socialist-feminist theory began to pose questions which the traditional Marxist concern with the capital/wage labour relationship had marginalized. The systematicity of the orthodox Marxist conception of social reproduction was fundamentally challenged, both from within a fragmented 'Western Marxism' and from emerging post-structuralist critiques. Feminist scholarship has demanded that the problematic of social reproduction is fundamentally one about the subject-structure relationship, and

has insisted "...against marxism's claims that the determining social relationship is between wage labour and capital, exploiter and exploited, proletarian and capitalist", that "...subjective identity is also constructed as masculine or feminine, placing the individual as husband or wife, mother or father, son or daughter.." (Alexander,1984:132). The search for the 'missing dialectic' begins.

Chapter Two examined one of the most fundamental concepts of socialist-feminist theory -- the gendered division of labour. I have stressed its historical creation, and the fundamental part that gender plays in organizing, not just allocating, labour in our society. In the critique of theoretical explanations for the gendered division of labour, and particularly in the gender, work and class debates, I noted a failure to recognized that class is always expressed in gendered terms, resulting from a persistent reification of the public/private dualism and its coincidence with the gendered division of labour.

Chapter Three aimed at historicizing, to make gender visible, the dualistic categories which underly theories of modernity -- public/private, individual/society, family/economy. Once historicized in this fashion, they appear not as ossified structures, but as shifting and fluid mechanisms of regulating identities -- to make legitimate the public expression of some identities, but to exclude others.

Chapter Four took up the question of the subject, and in particular, gendered subjects, as a crucial level of analysis in any theory of social reproduction. The simultaneously individual and social nature of the subject, alluded to but never fully explored by Marx, sets the basis for a conception of gendered subjects who actively interpret, within historically available modes of interpretation, their identities. This interpretation involves negotiating the multiple and often contradictory components of subjectivity, and sets the stage whereby identity may become a political point of departure.

Chapter Five extends the analysis to the politics of regulating gender polarity, which provides the context for the interpretation of identities. An examination of the realm of political discourse on gender and its regulation reveals that neither one unitary interest (class, gender) nor one single agent of regulation unilaterally imposes its 'reproductive will'. I have suggested that feminist practice -- or any critical practice -- must be directed at a refashioning of the public sphere, exposing the limits of institutional reform premised upon universalistic notions of rights and justice which mask the underlying gender polarity.

What conclusions, then, can we draw about the concept of social reproduction, and the two questions that it poses: "What is being reproduced?", and "How is the reproducing

accomplished?". Is social reproduction, as Connell (1987:44) suggests, a concept which only makes sense "...if an invariant structure is postulated at the start"? Connell's critique rests on the assumption that "social" equals "structure" and this is what is being reproduced. With this interpretation, it is a valid critique, and the concept of social reproduction should rightly be abandoned. If, however, we conceive of 'social' not as structural, but as relational, there are grounds for retaining the notion of social reproduction as an important concept for feminist analysis. Connell is correct in asserting that "...social structure must be seen as constantly constituted rather than constantly reproduced" (Ibid.), but a feminist analysis sees structure as being constantly constituted in a way which reproduces a fundamental relational assymetry between women and men -- actually, between women and fully individuated, autonomous human beings as they have been theoretically and practically constructed. I have tried to demonstrate that it is this assymetry, not any particular "invariant" structure, which is being reproduced.

The second question ("How is the reproducing accomplished?") is the one which a feminist analysis must focus upon if it is to avoid the slide into functionalism that has characterized so much of our theoretical history, and if it is to locate potentialities for subverting the reproduction of this assymetry. I do not propose to answer this question

here -- it is one which will keep feminist scholars busy for a long time -- but I will suggest some basic premises upon which we might undertake its enquiry. It is first and foremost, as I have demonstrated in the critique of essentialism (Chapter 4), not a question of absolute difference, but one of how difference is imbued with meaning and constructed as hierarchy.

Throughout this work I have attempted to juxtapose the considerable insights of more structrualist formulations of the reproduction of capitalist-patriarchy with more fluid conceptions of subjectivity and agency. As Barrett (1988a:x) suggests, this more flexible vocabulary is necessary if we are to escape the tendency "...to assign rank in what is effectively a zero-sum game of structural determinism". It is also suggests a necessary turn to developing theory from the standpoint of people, rather than that of structures or systems. It is only people who have needs, who act, who 'cause'. This does not mean that social structures are simply aggregates of individuals, for clearly there are relationships and patterns which are organized so as to go beyond the experience of any one individual. It is essential, however, to retain an awareness of these as historically constructed, originating in human agency -- and not just agency conceived of as members of the dominant group unproblematically imposing their collective will. I have attempted to show, especially in

chapters 3 and 5, that both men and women were (and are) active participants in the processes of historical construction. As Lerner (1986:36) suggests:

> Once we abandon the concept of women as historical victims, acted upon by violent men, inexplicable "forces", and societal institutions, we must explain the central puzzle -- women's participation in the construction of the system that subordinates her.

If we dispense with the notion of some single unitary interest (capital accumulation, patriarchal domination) which provides 'the' logic of oppression, then there is room for recovery of the concept of 'unintended consequences'. As Hall (1988:45) suggests, interests "...are not only given as an objective feature of a structure of positions in a social system to which we are ascribed (and from which dangle the appropriate forms of consciousness) but they change historically". That is, that given certain historical conditions, women make what may be very reasonable choices (or perhaps the only 'rational' choice available), the long-run consequences of which are to create and re-create the conditions for their subordination.[1] Specific practices may mean very different things depending on whether we take the point of view of the individual or the point of view of the 'system'.

A central task that needs to be undertaken is the undermining of reified abstractions that have excluded women

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[1]This is the thesis of Lerner's (1986) impressive historical study of the "creation of patriarchy".

from full participation in history. This requires historicizing some of our basic concepts, especially the public/private dualism. As Seyla Benhabib (1987:86) notes, the dehistoricization of the private sphere "...signifies that, as the male ego celebrates his passage from nature to culture...women remain in a timeless universe, condemned to repeat the cycles of life". This is the theoretical trick by which women's subjectivity has been construed as being of a fundamentally different order than men's, and which sets up a gender polarity running through all levels, from psyche to polity. More accurately, we need to conceive of social relations, which exist in relationships of unequal power, as both inherited and re-created through their subjective inhabitation. What we have tended to study as 'social reproduction' might more accurately be described, then, as re-production, as "...a history of regularities derived from past struggles and a new history in the making" (Lipietz, 1988:7-36).

Cornel West (1988) has developed a framework for the analysis of Afro-American oppression which I think is paradigmatic for feminism. He employs what he terms a 'neo-Gramscian' approach which rejects the discursive reductionism and antitotalism of post-structuralism, but welcomes post-structuralism's efforts "...to dismantle the logocentric and a priori aspects of the Marxist tradition":

> In other words, I accent the *demystifying moment* in their genealogical and deconstructive practices which attack hegemonic Western discourses that invoke universality, scientificity, and objectivity in order to hide cultural plurality, conceal the power-laden play of differences and preserve hierarchical class, gender, racial, and sexual orientational relations (18).

West's framework has 3 'moments': 1) geneological inquiry into hegemonic logics (or 'discourses') and their counterhegemonic possibilities, 2) microinstitutional (or localized) analyses of "...the mechanisms that inscribe and sustain these logics" in everyday life and their counterhegemonic possibilities, and 3) a macrostructural analysis of "...modes of overdetermined class exploitation and political repression" and their counterhegemonic possibilities (Ibid.:21-2). The first 'moment', geneological inquiry, might include explorations of the discourses of religion, science, and the Western philosophy of identity which have historically constructed sexual difference as hierarchy. In particular, 'science' (scientific management, scientific child-rearing, socio-biology, etc.) discourses have acted as the great legitimators of hierarchy and oppression. The second 'moment', that of localized, microinstitutional analysis, takes 'the everyday world as problematic' (Smith, 1987), exploring the specific, historically-bounded playing out of these hegemonic logics in the workplace, the family, the marketplace, and so on. The third 'moment', macrostructural analysis ensures that we do not

retreat behind the insights of Marx, but radically build upon them.

It is a neo-Gramscian framework in that it uses Gramsci's metaphor of a 'historic bloc'[2] to replace the traditional Marxian base-superstructure metaphor, and thus promotes "...radically historical approach in which the economic, political, cultural and ideological regions of a social formation are articulated and elaborated in the form of overdetermined and often contradictory class and nonclass processes" (West,1988:20-1) This allows us to grasp that there are historical structural constraints on agency, but as West stresses: "Given the historical process, many structural constraints can become conjunctural opportunities". Herein lies the potential for identifying counterhegemonic possibilities -- in a word, resistance. Counterhegemonic possibilities, as West suggests, must be identified at each

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[2]It is the import of this concept, so essential to Gramsci's writings, that Laclau and Mouffe (1985) subvert in their post-structuralist interpretation. As Gramsci (1977:377) stresses, structures and superstructures form an historic bloc "...in which precisely material forces are the content and ideologies are the form, though this distinction between form and content has purely didactic value, since the material forces would be inconceivable historically without form and the ideologies would be individual fancies without the material forces". By severing the concept of hegemony from a material grounding, Laclau and Mouffe give us form without content.

level -- from the emergence of emancipatory discourses,[3] through localized resistance in the workplace to the more traditional Marxist focus on 'objective' economic crisis.

How might this analytic framework inform feminist theory? As I have tried to demonstrate throughout this work, no one level of analysis (psychoanalytic, economic, cultural, political) adequately captures the degree to which gender is woven into social life, yet neither can any level of analysis be jettisoned or collapsed into another. With a framework such as the one West has outlined, we can have our political economy and our discourse theory too, using the insights of each to illuminate the silences of the other. It also suggests a necessary break with any logocentric theory as the blueprint for practice. As Aronowitz and Giroux (1985:116) stress:

> ...the basis for generating a new critical and radical theory appropriate to the problems and lived experiences of the twentieth century demands a new discourse, one that is informed by the legacy of a critical Marxism but that, in the final analysis, has to break with its most fundamental assumptions and, as such break with Marxism as the master discourse of any emancipatory project.

Where Juliet Mitchell could suggest in 1971 that we needed to ask feminist questions and come up with Marxist answers, we can

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[3]This is a key criticism that I have made of poststructuralism -- that it cannot account for its own emergence as a non-repressive discourse. In this sense, it replicates a fundamental problem of earlier theories of 'false consciousness'. A key task for feminism, at the level of geneology, is accounting for its own emergence. Lerner (1986) and Riley (1988) both gesture towards this sort of analysis.

now ask feminist questions and come up with feminist answers.

And finally, a note on 'theory' itself. Bonnie Fox (1986) has recently expressed her "gut level impatience with scholastic debates". As she puts it:

> The observable differences between women and men in terms of life circumstances...privileges and personal power are blatant and large, and our collective understanding of their causes sufficient to make clear what must be fought for and against. So I wonder why we are writing: writing takes energy and time, which might better be used in the course of more concrete action. Nevertheless, I write out of a conviction about the importance of theory (1986:180).

I often share her impatience, and I, too, write out of a conviction about the importance of theory. I am less sure, however, that 'our collective understanding' of the causes of women's oppression is as yet sufficient to 'make clear what must be fought for and against', nor can I easily separate writing theory and 'concrete action'. This does not mean that we should stop fighting until we're absolutely theoretically clear on what should be fought for and against. It does mean that we must continually test our theory against our political successes and failures, and vice versa. Writing feminist theory is a political act, and it is its inherently political nature which gives it the potential to revitalize socialist theory. I will conclude, then, with a quote from Mary Hawkesworth (1989:533) which eloquently expresses this potential and sets out the point of departure that we must

grasp:

> Precisely because feminists move beyond texts to confront the world, they can provide concrete reasons in specific contexts for the superiority of their accounts. Such claims to superiority are derived not from some privileged standpoint of the feminist knower nor from the putative merits of particular intuitions but from the strength of rational argument, from the ability to demonstrate point by point the deficiencies of alternative explanations. At their best, feminist analyses engage both the critical intellect and the world,...

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